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陳氏
太極拳圖說

THE ILLUSTRATED CANON OF CHEN FAMILY TAIJIQUAN

by Chen Xin (Chen Pin San)

Wen County
Henan Province

陳氏太極拳圖說

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Editor's note

"The Illustrated Canon of Chen Family Taijiquan" is universally acknowledged by the Taoist community and Taiji practitioners as the seminal sourcebook of Taiji philosophy and techniques. A work of intense scholarship which took over fourteen years to complete, this tome was intended by its author to be both the first ever written repository of Taiji lore, and a referential resource for Taiji instructors and practitioners for generations to follow.

The English translation of this canon marks the first ever attempt to translate into English Chen Xin's highly esoteric and detailed technical explanations of Chen-style Taijiquan techniques, including his meticulous inscriptions for over 400 illustrations. Given the complexity of the material, the main objectives of this translation are twofold. First, to render the work accessible to as wide an audience as possible by modernizing and simplifying the language while conserving the integrity of the author's intention and instruction. To this end, the Pinyin transliteration system has been used to standardize the spelling of all Chinese nouns, and footnotes have been added wherever additional clarification was deemed necessary. The second objective is to encourage its usage as a reference book by improving on the user-friendliness of its structure. Hence, minor adjustments were made in the order and naming of the chapters, and more importantly, the order of inscriptions explaining the illustrations have been clarified through a detailed numbering system.

While many areas for translation and editorial improvement remain, it is hoped that readers will find this first edition a useful introduction into the philosophy and techniques of Chen Taijiquan and a valuable source of knowledge as their practice and understanding evolves.

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A Song of Taijiquan by Chen Pan-ling

in commemoration of the publication of this book

The great beginning of heaven and earth
Springs from *Wuji*, the Ultimate Nothingness,
As well as from the Grand Terminus of *Taiji*,
Which gives to the myriad things their completion.

Hence everyone has the *Taiji* motif in their bosom;
A human being is created in the image of heaven,
Whose nature is to return to his origin.
The pre-birth jing essence, the post-birth *qi* energy,
And the eternal *shen* spirit are managed upon one principle,
The all-embracing pattern.

Running to the extreme of greatness and firmness,
You can pass on heaven and earth, these two extremes,
The mysteries of which are fathomless and out of count,
But incomparable in their courage.

Our Chen family is from Wen County —
Upholders of the outstanding abilities of Master Chen Ying-yi;
True guardians of the great ancestors' traditions in boxing,
Entitled by the all-embracing name *Taiji*;

Inheritors of Taijiquan's prosperity and flourishing;
Researchers and explainers of the Book of Changes,
We try for people's understanding
That Inner and Outer work in accord with each other.

Stupid and ignorant people today create the art of this country-
You can see a great many of them in every sphere and field;
But those who employ the spirit of *gong-fu* are very few
And cannot be compared in number.

Develop your strength and enjoy your potential,
Tacitly pursuing your purpose;
Be aware of the Classics and never cheat others —
These words you can take as your lifetime motto!

Enjoy this book's long-awaited publication,
Pages wherein you'll find many things of interest.
Admire and respect them with goodwill,
And encourage your good friends to read this book too.

INTRODUCTION: THEORY & PHILOSOPHY

陳氏太極拳圖說

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1 • Useful notes to readers

When learning *Taijiquan*, the practitioner cannot afford any display of irreverence. Outwardly, one must show respect to one's masters and friends. Inwardly, one must respect the body and mind. If one cannot practice self-control and restraint, how can the art of *Taijiquan* be mastered?

When learning *Taijiquan*, one cannot commit any violence, otherwise one will inevitably get into trouble. All manner of violence or assault is inadmissible. One should demonstrate tactful behavior; otherwise, any display of violence will inevitably lead to damage within.

The *Taijiquan* practioner should never be conceited nor self-satisfied, otherwise she who is complacent provokes trouble. As the saying goes, "No one can attain final perfection." This means that only a modest practitioner is able to sufficiently purify her mind to adopt the teachings of the master. Isn't this what is known as "goodness and perfection"? Why not produce more good in the hope of perfection? By sharing good with others, we multiply goodness.

The *Taijiquan* practioner must apply ceaseless efforts to make his mind penetratingly aware of each tiny transformation taking place in the postures. If not, he who doesn't pay attention to his movements and postures will lose control over his senses and as a result, provoke confusion and disorder This will manifest in the upper body as awkwardness and sluggishness, while the lower body becomes unbalanced and 'uprooted'.

One must always be very careful and sensitive, keeping the eyes open. Otherwise, the blood arteries and energy channels will become impassable, leading to fragmentation of the entire *Taiji* routine, irregular and abrupt *qi* flow, resulting in a loss of integrity and harmony of *yuan-qi* or primordial energy.

The *Taijiquan* practioner must first of all study the theory and learn the classics to grasp the nature and core principles of *Taijiquan*. This will make the practice and mastery of *Taijiquan* easier.

The *Taijiquan* practioner should understand the principles of *yin* and *yang*, opening and closing, as well as her own body, which is the natural embodiment of universal macrocosmic principles. A good master will have no need to add or detract from these principles, abiding them as the flawless doctrines of the Golden Mean.

Although *Taijiquan* does not play a significant part in modern society, it exists still in some countries thanks to dedicated followers who do not treat it as a martial art, but focus instead on studying the theory of the art, applying its laws and principles during infantry exercises and marches.

Compare this, in contrast, with the indifferent and negligent officials of this country, who during infantry exercises or combat, place more importance on using strength and brute force. How can such ignorant philistines hope to save society and maintain the integrity of this country? So, keep your mind open and do not be misled nor deluded by the words of such "grass and firewood collectors"!

The *Taijiquan* practioner should not be involved in any vice such as robbery, gambling, adultery, sexual seduction, immoral acts, which only corrupt his heavenly soul and provoke the spirits and the wrath of gods. What can such a 'practitioner' contribute to the world? How can he possibly be of help to others?

The *Taijiquan* practioner should not be impulsive nor fierce, a bully nor an oppressor. Those who indulge in these traits will be driven to crime.

If the reader encounters any errors, omissions or missing words in this book, please do not hesitate to contact the publisher for corrections.

2 ✦ Diagram of No Extremes or Ultimate Nothingness (Wuji)

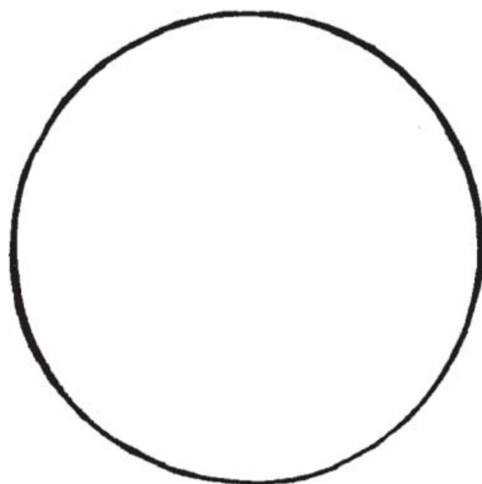


Fig. 0.2.1 No Extremes or Ultimate Nothingness (Wuji)

3 ✦ Diagram of Supreme Extremes (Taiji)



Fig. 0.3.1 Supreme Extremes (Taiji)

4 ◆ Explanation of the He River Map (He-tu)

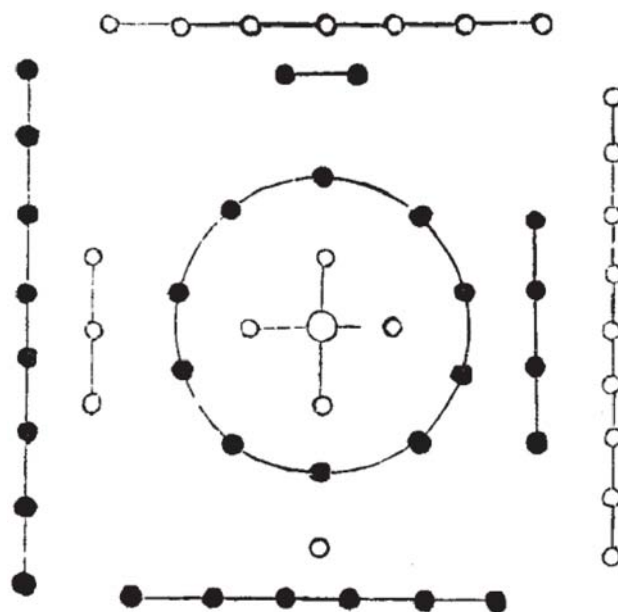


Fig. 0.4.1 The He River Map (He-tu)

The Book of Changes says: "To heaven belongs the number one[1]; to earth two[2]; to heaven three; to earth four; to heaven five; to earth six; to heaven seven; to earth eight; to heaven nine; to earth ten.

Five numbers belong to heaven: one, three, five, seven and nine. Five numbers also belong to earth: two, four, six, eight and ten. These two series of five numbers correspond to each other, each number matched with a 'mate' in the sequence, as shown in the following: one and six correlate with water; two and seven with fire; three and eight with wood; four and nine with metal; five and ten with earth.

When one is added to four, or two to three, the result is five. When six is added to nine, or seven to eight and five to ten, they all total fifteen. Also, when one is combined with nine, or two with eight, three with seven, and four with six, the total is always ten.

[1] An odd number.
[2] An even number.

The heavenly numbers[3], one, three, five, seven and nine, total twenty-five; the earthly numbers[4], two, four, six, eight and ten, amount to thirty. Adding numbers of both heaven and earth we get fifty-five. It is these patterns that keep the spirits and gods in motion, thereby effecting changes and transformations.

5 • Explanation of the Luo River Writings (Luo-shu)

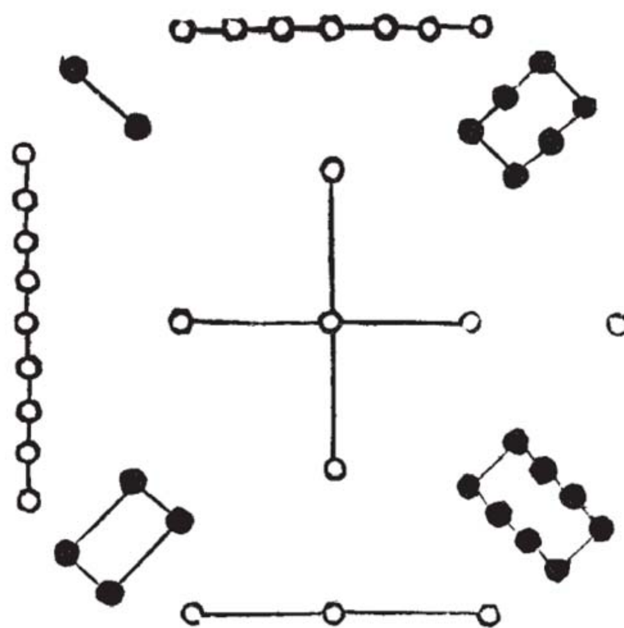


Fig. 0.5.1 The Luo River Writings (Luo-shu)

The numbers in the Luo River Writings come to a total of forty-five. The odd numbers (one, three, seven, nine) correlate with the four cardinal directions (*si zheng*): heaven, earth, water and fire. The even numbers (two, four, six, eight) correspond to the four corners (*si yu*) respectively: thunder, wind, mountain and marsh.

[3] Heavenly numbers are odd numbers.
[4] Earthly numbers are even numbers.

The number five is located at the center (*zhong*) of the motif, which is the place of the Sovereign and of *Taiji* (Supreme Extremes). The vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines correlate with the Eight Sections or Solar Terms (*ba-jie*) and they total fifteen. They comprise of:

- the three Stems at the bottom;
- the four Chords in the right lower corner;
- the Five Phases in the center;
- and the Eight Screens in the left lower corner.

Thus crossing the four cardinal directions and the four corners, we get the He-tu diagram or the He River Map, which encompasses the all-embracing *Taijiquan* cycles and zigzags performed according to the Law. Nothing exists beyond this external manifestation.

6 ✦ Illustrated explanations of the Eight Trigrams according to the sequence of Fu Xi

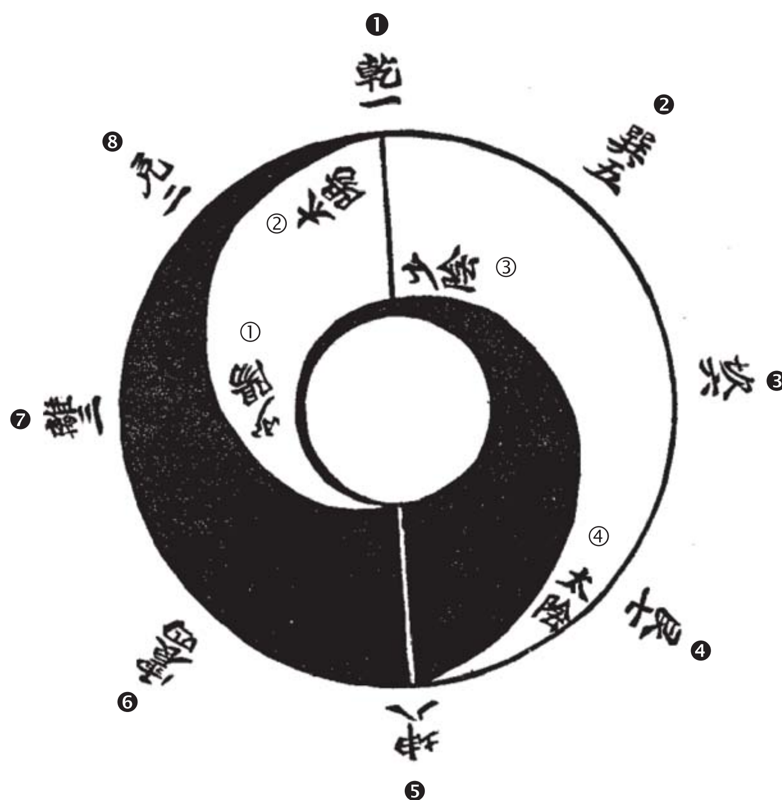


Fig. 0.6.1 The Eight Trigrams according to the sequence of Fu Xi

Inscriptions around the circle :

❶ Qian · One;
❷ Xun · Five;
❸ Kan · Six;
❹ Gen · Seven;
❺ Kun · Eight;
❻ Zhen · Four;
❼ Li · Three;
❽ Dui · Two.

Inscriptions within the circle:

① shao-yang;
② tai-yang;
③ shao-yin;
④ tai-yin.

7 • Illustrated explanations of the Eight Trigrams according to the sequence of King Wen



Fig. 0.7.1 The Eight Trigrams according to the sequence of King Wen

Inscriptions:

- ❶ Li;
- ❷ *Kun;*
- ❸ *Dui;*
- ❹ *Qian;*
- ❺ *Kan;*
- ❻ *Gen;*
- ❼ *Zhen;*
- ❽ *Xun*[5].

[5] The Eight Trigrams correspond to natural elements: Li (fire), Kun (earth), Dui (marsh), Qian (heaven), Kan (water), Gen (mountain), Zhen (thunder), Xun (wind).

All Confucian scholars base their writings regarding King Wen's sequence of the Eight Trigrams on Master Shao-Zi's interpretation, which states that the Light-coloured half of the *Taiji* motif exists in opposition to the dark half.

King Wen begins his sequence with the *Zhen* figure (thunder). Though no further comment on this point seems necessary, Master Zhu-Zi[6] states that King Wen's arrangement is still as yet ungraspable because there remains many unresolved issues. Comparing King Wen's sequence with that of Fu Xi, it seems to me that most people still do not comprehend their meaning, not to mention their application in practice. As a consequence, the most distributed representation of the Eight Trigrams has defaulted to one showing images of the annual seasons — spring, summer, autumn and winter — in a sequence corresponding to the creation of the Five Elements — wood, fire, earth, metal and water respectively. Let us look at Confucius' explanations regarding this:

> *"According to King Wen's arrangement, God is represented as the heavenly virtue of integrity whose energy in the yearly cycle begins in spring. Thus he comes forth in Zhen, the symbol of stimulus to movement. He puts forward his processes of communication into full and equal action in Xun (wind or wood), the symbol of penetration, in the time of penetration into summer. This process is called 'Xun'. Xun is placed at the southeast. Communication of the myriad things here brings full and equal action. Zhen is followed by Xun, which carries the image wood. Li (fire) symbolizes what is bright and beautiful, so all things face in His direction in Li. Then Li meets with Kun (earth). South correlates with fire but fire gives birth to earth. Earth, in turn, can produce metal; therefore, Kun (earth) and Gen (mountain) both correspond to the realm of earth, while wood and water correlate with the southeast, and metal and fire with the southwest."*

[6] Also written as Zhu Xi.

"All myriad things are manifested in full accordance with the abundance of the four seasons, receiving their nourishment from earth. Therefore there is time for completion and there is time for beginning. Kun (earth) is the symbol of docility — it is always calm and never resistant. Kun is followed by Dui (marsh), symbol of pleasure and satisfaction; all things succeed and thus rejoice in Dui. Qian (heaven) symbolizes strength, so vigorous people struggle a lot in Qian. Kan (water) is a drawback or hazard, and symbolizes what has fallen down. He who ascends to the superior position must be at ease and Light while those below in difficult circumstances must work hard and suffer much. Therefore Kan is the symbol of hardship, and is followed by Gen (mountain), symbol of completion. The energy of the year completes its work in Gen, which in seasonal terms, corresponds to late winter and the beginning of spring."

Of prime significane in Confucius' explanations of the Eight Trigrams is the meaning allocated to the word 'resistance' or 'fighting,' which though never maintained in *Kun* (docility), is very much productive in *Qian* (heaven or strength). This word, also known as 'hardship,' is borne in *Kan* (water), which all Confucian scholars interpret without exception as a symbol of peril and evil.

One is the number that gives birth to water while six is the number of its completion. *Kan* (water) is placed under Zi (1), the number of birth and completion of water[7]. Therefore, *Kan* belongs to water.

Two is the number that gives birth to fire while seven is the number of its completion. *Li* (fire) is located under Wu (7), the number of birth and completion of fire[8]. Therefore *Li* belongs to fire.

[7] While the number one denotes the birth of water, it also implies the completion of water in the preceding phase, hence it is the number of both the birth and completion of water.
[8] While the number seven denotes the completion of fire, it also implies its birth in the next phase, hence it is the number of both the birth and completion of fire.

Three in the number that gives birth to wood while eight is the number of its completion. *Zhen* (thunder) is placed at the east while *Xun* (wood) at the southeast. Three is the number of heaven while eight is the number of earth; therefore *Zhen* and *Xun* belong to wood.

Four is the number that gives birth to metal while nine is the number of its completion. *Dui* (marsh) is located at the west while *Qian* (heaven) at the northwest. Four is the number of earth, while nine is the number of heaven; therefore *Dui* and *Qian* belong to metal.

Five is the number that gives birth to earth while ten in the number of its completion. *Gen* (mountain) and *Kun* (earth) are placed at the northeast and southwest respectively, midway between the heavenly five and the earthly ten; therefore *Gen* and *Kun* belong to earth.

The above sequence of the Eight Trigrams is arranged in accordance with the numbers of creation under the principle of the Five Phases. As to the monthly climate according to the lunar calendar, eight is the number of completion that corresponds to spring, seven corresponds to summer, nine to autumn and six to winter.

Why does the heavenly number one give birth to water, the earthly number two give birth to fire, the heavenly number three give birth to wood, the earthly number four give birth to metal? According to arrangement of the Eight Trigrams, this is explained by the heaven-earth and *yin-yang* concepts which state that the binomial *yin* and *yang* issue forth from *Kan* (water) and *Li* (fire) and are placed under the numbers Zi (1) and Wu (7).

Yang is clear and bright, *yin* is dark and chaotic. If we try to reflect things from the position of clear and bright *yang*, we will see that *yang* is hidden deep within *Kan* (water), while dark and chaotic *yin* is placed outside. Hence water is able to reflect things from within but not from outside. The brightness of *yang* is manifested externally in the image of *Li* (fire), while the darkness of *yin* is manifested from within in the image of *Kan*. Thus fire is able to reflect things from the outside but not from within.

Looking at this, we see how *yin* and *yang* create the internal and external manifestations of *Kan* and Li, despite the fact that when the *yang* of *Kan* is placed within it, the *yang* substance comes forth under the number Zi (1). That is why it is said that the heavenly number one produces water. Once water is mature, wood can be born. Therefore the heavenly number three produces wood as well. Since *yin* of *Li* is placed within it, the *yin* substance is engendered under the number Wu (7). That is why it is said that the earthly number two produces fire. Once fire is ripe, earth must be born, which, in turn, gives birth to metal.

The earthly number four produces metal too, following the clockwise order from *Kan* and *Gen* to *Zhen* and *Xun*, in other words, from a northerly position to east. The sector under numbers Zi (1), Chou (2), Yin (3), Mao (4), Chen (5) and Si (6) correlate with the *yang* substance procreated by heaven so the numbers from Zi (1) to Si (6) denote the heavenly half of the *Taiji* diagram, or the pure *yang* or positive pole.

Upon arrival at Wu (7), the procreated *yin* flows from *Li* to *Kun*, then to *Dui* and *Qian*, in the direction from the south to west, and is manifested as Wu (7), Wei (8), Shen (9), You (10), Xu (11) and Hai (12) respectively.

Procreated by earth substance, *yin* arrives at Hai (12) and represents the earthly half, the dark *yin* (negative pole or 'fish') in the *Taiji* motif. Therefore the *yang* substance of *Gen*, procreated under Zi (1) and positioned between north and east, belongs to the heavenly engendered *Kun* located between south and west and thus identified as the product of earth.

If we look at Fu Xi's pre-birth and King Wen's post-birth sequences of the Eight Trigrams, it is quite difficult to see that the former forms an integral part of the latter. In actual fact, the whole of heaven (if we speak about it in these terms) encompasses everything discussed in the previous paragraphs. This includes the concepts of virtue (*de*), awareness (*ming*), sequence (*xu*), good or ill luck (*ji-xiong*) displayed through the idea of the binomial pre- and post-stratum of one's *gong-fu* as the system of internal energy cultivation. All these things must be combined into one power, from which the

practitioner can then attain highly effective capabilities. As the saying goes, "One's words should express the spirit and wisdom of one's mind." Spirit begets knowledge, while lack of knowledge can be compared to a beginner who utilizes his knowledge in a way similar to the post-birth qualities, through which he gradually comes to see the individual spirit as the essence of the pre-birth function. Through learning the details of each particular posture and through extensive practice of *Taiji* routines, the practitioner obtains skills to unveil her pre-birth wisdom and original spirit.

He who attains the post-birth qualities can understand the wholeness of integral numbers; he who achieves the pre-birth level cannot grasp even a part of the fractional value. From the symbols of the Eight Trigrams, one can determine this by following the pre-birth sequence, according to which the *Qian* trigram is located south above the circle but *Kun* is placed north below it. The pre-birth arrangement also discriminates equally between six *yin* and six *yang* with trigrams and places trigrams pairs in opposition to each other to stimulate the heavenly and earthly numbers crossing downwards. So, we see trigram *Li* allocated to the south and *Kan* to the north, with the other trigram pairs interacting with each other along the same principles as well — *Qian* and *Kun*, *Dui* and *Gen*, *Li* and *Kan*, *Zhen* and *Xun*.

On closer examination, however, the apparently equal divisions of the Eight Trigrams reveal a deeper complexity. We find that the heavenly and earthly number nine, symbol of *yang*, and six, symbol of *yin* or seven solar months of 31 days and five solar months of 30 days are distributed in a certain order. As for divisions in the day during spring and autumn, both day and night consist of six double hours or watches. Daybreak, or one hour before sunrise, corresponds to dawn while the evening, one hour after sunset, corresponds to twilight. Therefore daytime consists of seven watches while the night has five.

According to the yearly arrangement approportioned by the numbers Zi (1) and Wu (7), we can differentiate between six months of *yang* and six months of *yin*, passing from midwinter to the summer solstice and vice versa.

According to the yearly *yin* and *yang* cycle, *yang* does not come forth under Zi (1) but issues forth under Hai (12) according to the earthly Branches, surpassing *Qian* in the previous position under the Hai number.

The northwest sector is known for its warm climate in the tenth lunar month. Hence, the issuing forth of *yin* is inappropriate under Wu (7), but more appropriate under Wei (8). This means that the figure next in order, Kun, correlates with the following Wei (8), but not with Wu (7).

The southwest sector achieves the heavenly circle of 360 degrees divided equally into twelve Chambers and limited to twelve months. Each Chamber correlates with a sector of 30 degrees and each month consists of 29/5 days as the fractional amount. From Zi (1) to Wu (7) there are seven excess months, which amounts to 210 degrees of the circle, plus an additional 6 degrees of the sign Hai (12), which comes to a total of 216 degrees, the symbol of *Qian* (heaven). Conversely, there are five excess months from Wei (8) to Hai (12), amounting to 150 degrees, minus an additional 6 degrees of *Qian*, making a totally of 144 degrees, which equals the symbol of *Kun* (earth). Both sets make a total of 360 degrees, corresponding to the number of days in the lunar year.

The plan of *Qian* consists of three groups per 72, or nine series of 24 each. The plan of *Kun* consists of two groups per 72, or six series of 24 each. Therefore it is said that the heavenly and earthly signs rely on such numbers that demonstrate the fractional amount to compose the whole number of the true roots. How did it come about that *Taiji* (Supreme Extremes) and *Wuji* (No Extremes, Ultimate Nothingness or Undivided Oneness) are composed of fractional amounts?

The masters of *Taiji* boxing created a system called *Chan-si jing* or the silk-reeling method of the energy regeneration to move *Qian* and *Kun* silently without breaking, in such a way that the coiling threads or spiral-like lines arrange vital energy flow thoughout the body. On hearing this, people of the boxing world exclaimed, "How marvelous!"

The whole point is never to carry things out to extremes. According to arrangement of Fu Xi, *Qian* becomes full in the south and rests in the northwest, while *Kun* gains fullness in the north and rests in the southwest. Upon returning to their original source, both begin again from the beginning.

Li rests in the east but becomes full in the south, to be replaced then by *Qian*. *Kan* rests in the west but gains fullness in the north, to be subsequently replaced by *Kun*. Although it is said that *Li* is in position above and *Kan* below, in actual fact, she who goes ahead will achieve high virtue (*de*) in the end. The virtue of *Li* is caused by *Zhen*, while the virtue of *Kan* depends on the collection of water in *Dui*, the depths from which *Dui* is created. *Dui* is also subdued by *Xun*. As an old poem says, "…blowing gently, the vale wind disperses shadows and drives away the rain." The rain is a collection of water, a marsh, and it gives birth to all grains, whose spirits never die.

Zhen starts its completion at the final stage of *Gen*, the symbol of stopping. In fact, the cycle has neither a beginning nor end, as the former always follows the latter and vice versa. According to the sequence of King Wen, God comes forth in *Zhen* to the world of her creation. She brings her processes to fullness and equal action in *Xun* (wind); she meets with the whole world in *Li* (fire); the greatest service is done for her in *Kun* (earth); she rejoices in *Dui* (marsh) through verbal communication; she struggles in *Qian* (heaven); she works hard and becomes exhausted in *Kan* (water); and she completes her work and speech in *Gen* (mountain). She is spirit (*shen*). Spirit is what makes all myriad things beautiful in communication. Verbal communication runs in all directions and is unconfined by methods. There are four double-hours for transmitting communication, though this is not confined by hours and is limitless in time. The pre-birth and post-birth arrangements are combined into Oneness, known as *Taiji* boxing or the Way (*dao*). He who has strong willpower will be able to attain the ability to master the martial arts.

8 • Illustrated explanations of the Supreme Extremes (Taiji) producing the Two Forms (Liang-yi), the Four Symbols (Si-xiang) and the Eight Trigrams (Ba-gua)

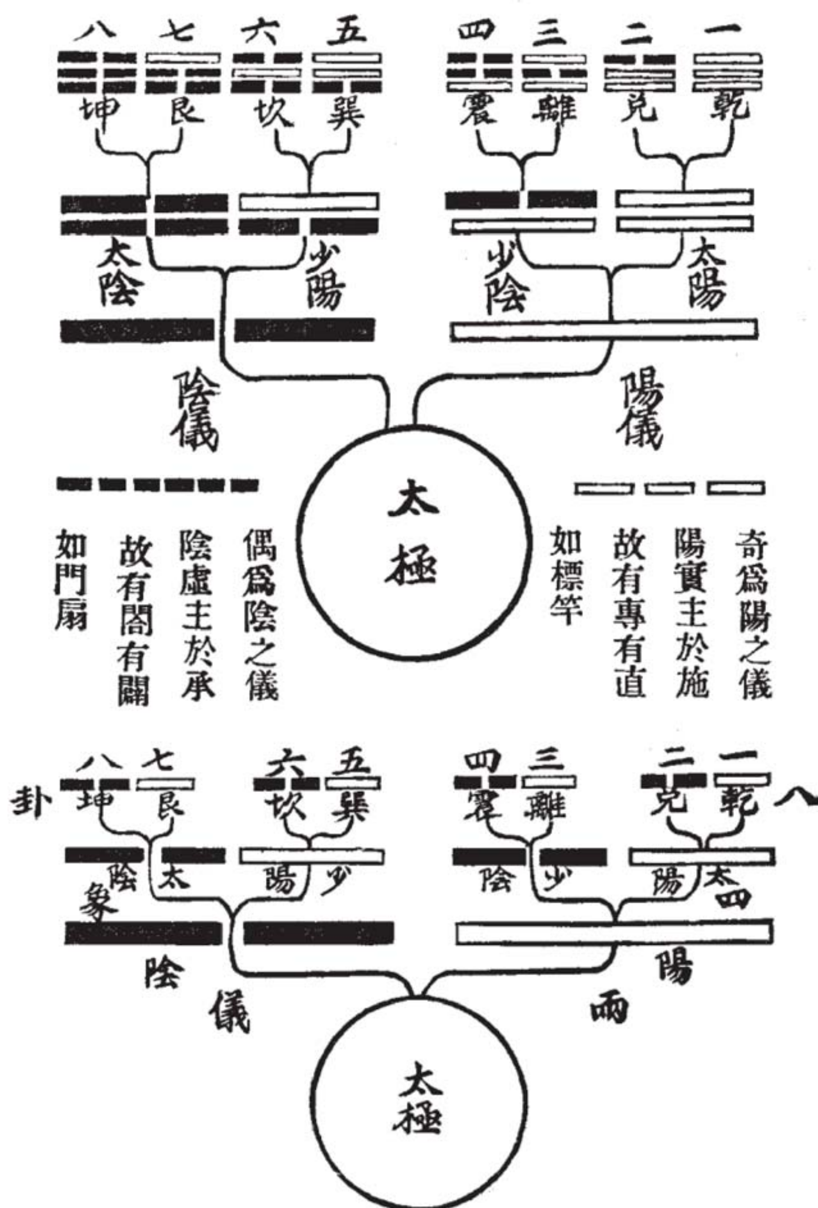


Fig. 0.8.1 The Supreme Extremes (Taiji) producing the Two Forms (Liang-yi), the Four Symbols (Si-xiang) and the Eight Trigrams (Ba-gua)

Odd numbers of undivided lines represent the form of *yang*. When *yang* substance is full, its main function is in activity. Therefore it is specific and concrete like a marking pole.

Even numbers of divided lines represent the form of *yin*. When *yin* substance is empty, its main function is in passivity. Therefore it closes and opens, like the wings of a door.

Fu Xi created only Two Forms (*Liang-yi*): one undivided and one divided line to give rise to all the Eight Trigrams, evoking much commentary from successive sages, such as:

> *One yang above another yang forms a symbol that can be classified as Old Yang or a naturally old male;*
>
> *One yang above a yin makes a symbol that can be classified as Young Yin or a naturally young female;*
>
> *One yin above a yang makes a symbol that can be classified as Young Yang or a naturally young male;*
>
> *One yin above another yin makes a symbol that can be classified as Old Yin or a naturally old female.*
>
> *Old Yang above another yang makes Qian;*
>
> *Old Yang above a yin makes Dui;*
>
> *Young Yin above a yang makes Li;*
>
> *Young Yin above another yin makes Zhen;*
>
> *Young Yang above another yang makes Xun;*
>
> *Young Yin above another yin makes Kan;*
>
> *Old Yin above a yang makes Gen;*
>
> *Old Yin above a yin makes Kun.*

The Supreme Extremes (*Taiji*) produce the Two Forms (*Liang-yi*), *yin* and *yang*. The Two Forms give birth to the Four Symbols (*Si-xiang*), which are Old *Yang*, Young *Yin*, Young *Yang*, Old *Yin*. The Four Symbols put forth the Eight Trigrams: *Qian*, *Dui*, *Li*, *Zhen*, *Xun*, *Kan*, *Gen* and *Kun*.

True symbols of the Eight Trigrams arise from their forms in the natural way. Therefore the myriad things between heaven and earth obtain their forms and have certain corresponding numbers or destinies to pass through. Among all the other things, there are people who drink, eat, and die young or who are gifted and rejoice in longevity. People in ancient times were unable to escape these vicissitudes, so the sages of old taught them the correct way through making great deals.

The three strong lines of *yang* and three weak lines of *yin* combine with each other in interaction; such a combination is called the 'transverse interrelation' of heaven and earth.

The top strong line of Old *Yin* interacts with the top weak line of Old *Yang;* such a combination denotes that the symbols for mountain and marsh exchange influences.

The bottom strong line of Old *Yin* interacts with the bottom weak line of Old *Yang;* such a combination means that the symbols for thunder and wind stimulate each other even more.

The lines of Young *Yang* interact with the lines of Young *Yin;* such a combination means that the symbols for water and fire do each other no harm.

9 ✦ Illustrated explanations of the coincided numbers of the Eight Trigrams

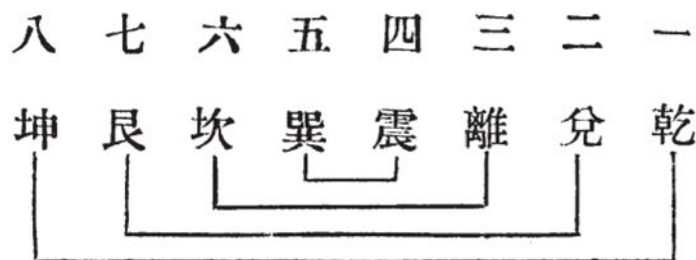


Fig. 0.9.1 The coincided numbers of the Eight Trigrams

According to the pre-birth sequence of Fu Xi:

- One corresponds to *Qian*;
- Two corresponds to *Dui*;
- Three corresponds to *Li*;
- Four corresponds to *Zhen*;
- Five corresponds to *Xun*;
- Six corresponds to *Kan*;
- Seven corresponds to *Gen*;
- Eight corresponds to *Kun*.

The odd number one and the even number eight are the natural numbers of heaven and earth. The *Qian* trigram begins under number one while the trigram *Kun* finishes under number Eight.

A sum of two (*Dui*) and Seven (*Gen*) less one make eight, as do the sum of three (*Li*) and Six (*Kan*) less one, and the sum of four (*Zhen*) and five (*Xun*) less one. Following this, we can see that the Eight Trigrams are based on the concept of *Qian* and *Kun*.

Therefore it is said that the concept the first two hexagrams *Qian* and *Kun*, first formed by a Confucian scholar in the Song period (960-1279), is the key to grasping the principle of changes. Without this concept, there is no way to realize the way of changes. The explanation of this concept in the Book of Changes takes up a whole section, belying its importance. The

sequence of the Eight Trigrams according to Fu Xi also starts from *Qian* and *Kun*.

In simple terms, we can reduce the concept of *Qian* and *Kun* to the fact that heaven occupies its place above while earth is placed below; the sun rises at the east, and the moon appears at the west; the mountain occupies its position in the southwest, but the marsh collects its waters in the southeast; the wind starts to blow in the southwest, but thunder shakes and peals in the northeast. Therefore it is said that the good luck of heaven and earth needs neither reasoning nor theoretical support.

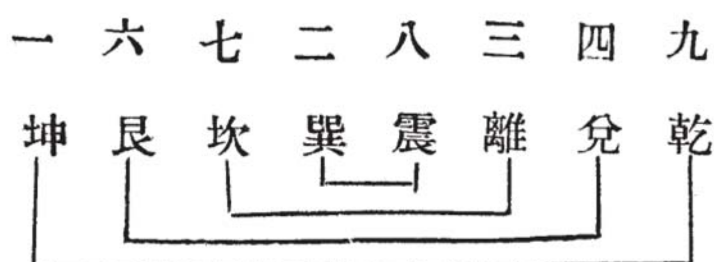


Fig. 0.9.2 The coincided numbers of the Eight Trigrams (cont'd)

- Nine corresponds to *Qian*;
- Four corresponds to *Dui*;
- Three corresponds to *Li*;
- Eight corresponds to *Zhen*;
- Two corresponds to *Xun*;
- Seven corresponds to *Kan*;
- Six corresponds to *Gen*;
- One corresponds to *Kun*.

The sequence of the Eight Trigrams in Fig. 0.9.2 is arranged according to the total of nine of the matched ordinal numbers. The arrangement of the Eight Trigrams in Fig. 0.5.1 is known as the Luo River Writings and arranged according to the total of ten. Martial arts experts and masters emphasize two aspects when teaching their students — the cultivation of moral qualities and the training of technique, exhorting students to apply both with undivided attention.

10 ✦ Illustrated explanations of the Eight Trigrams movement according to the pre-birth arrangement

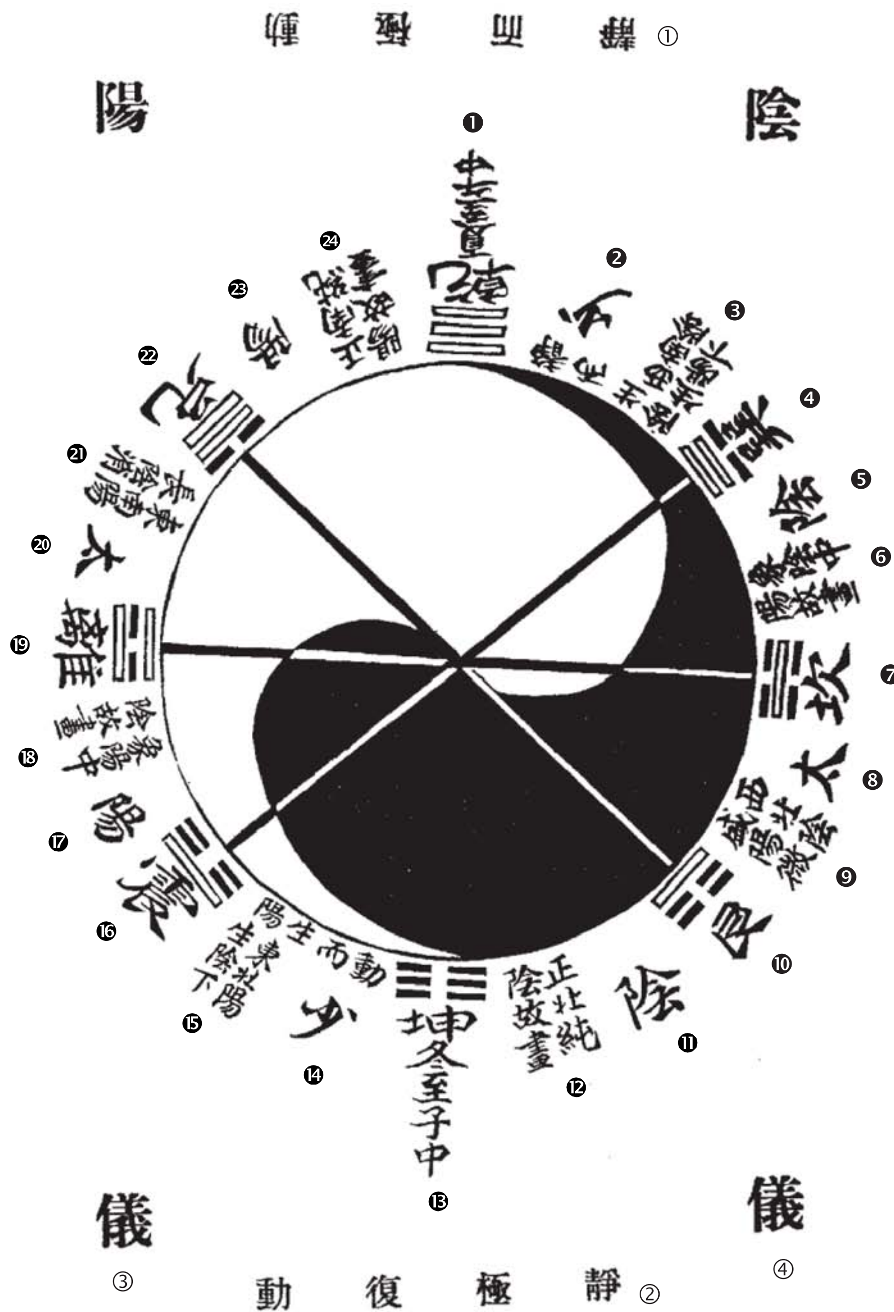


Fig. 0.10.1 The Eight Trigrams movement according to the pre-birth arrangement

Inscriptions around the circle:

1. *Qian*; the summer solstice under Wu (7);
2. Shao-Yin; rest gives birth to *Yin*
3. The *yin* line is born at southwest under two *yang* lines of *Xun;*
4. *Xun;*
5. *Yin;*
6. The image of a strong line between two weak lines of Kan;
7. *Kan;*
8. Tai-Yin;
9. *Yin* is strong at northwest but *yang* is weak at *Gen;*
10. *Gen;*
11. *Yin;*
12. Pure *yin* is at the north in the image of *Kun;*
13. *Kun*; the winter solstice under sign Zi (1);
14. Shao-Yang;
15. *Yang* gives birth to motion;
16. The *yang* line is born at the northeast under two *yin* lines of *Zhen;*
17. *Yang;*
18. The image of a weak divided line between the two strong undivided lines of *Li;*
19. *Li;*
20. Tai-Yang;
21. *Yang* grows at the southeast while *yin* declines;
22. *Dui;*
23. *Yang;*
24. At the south we have pure *yang* of *Qian*.

Inscriptions at the boundaries:

① When stillness culminates, motion recommences;

② Once motion culminates, stillness replaces it;

③ the *yang* form;

④ the *yin* form.

In the *Taiji* diagram above (Fig. 0.10.1), we see first of all that Two Forms, Four Symbols and Eight Trigrams are combined into one single chart of the Supreme Extremes (*Taiji*). Secondly, the form of *yang* is placed on the left while the from of *yin* is on the right, dividing the circle into four sections, that is, if we consider Young *Yang* (*Shao-yang*) and Old *Yang* (*Lao-yang*) on the left, and Young *Yin* (*Shao-yin*) and Old *Yin* (*Lao-yin*) on the right. The four sections are then subdivided into eight parts: *Qian* at the south and *Kun* at the north; *Li* in the east and *Kan* in the west. *Zhen*, *Xun*, *Dui* and *Gen* are placed at the Four Corners (*Si-yu*). Such naturally arranged sequences have no need for further contributions from humans.

11 • Illustrated explanations of the Eight Trigrams according to the pre-birth sequence of Fu Xi

1. Explanations of the Eight Trigrams according to the pre-birth sequence of Fu Xi

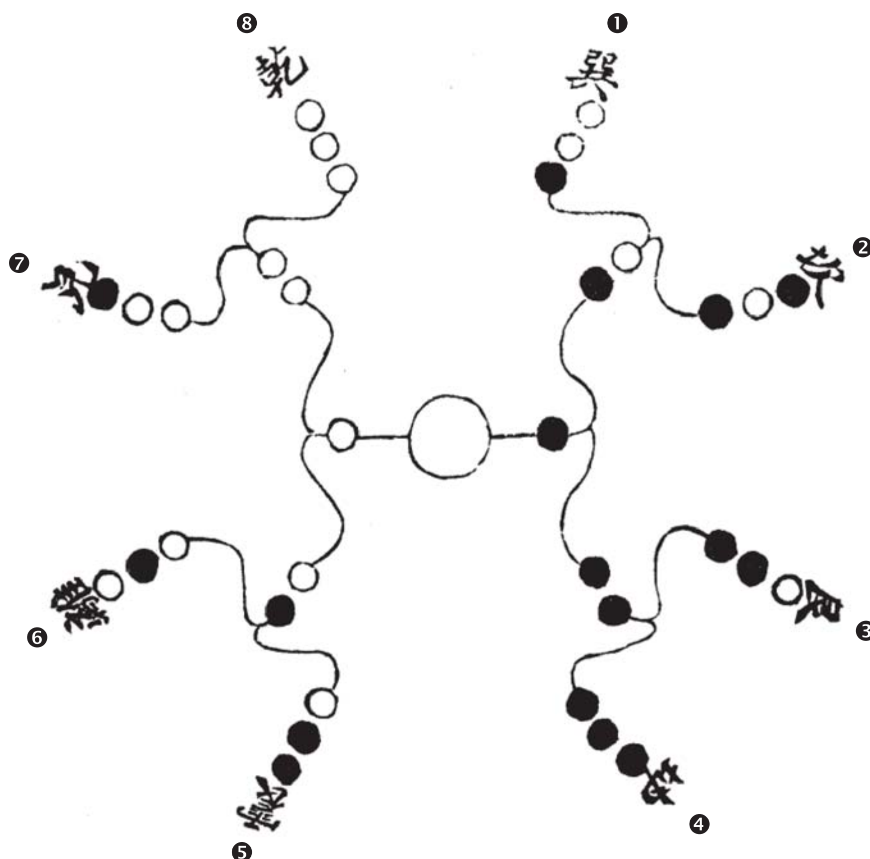


Fig. 0.11.1 Movement of the Eight Trigrams according to the pre-birth sequence of Fu Xi

Inscriptions:

❶ *Xun;*
❷ *Kan;*
❸ *Gen;*
❹ *Kun;*
❺ *Zhen;*
❻ *Li;*
❼ *Dui;*
❽ *Qian.*

In the *Xi-ci zhuan* or Great Appendix to the Book of Changes, it is said:

> *"In the system of the Changes there is the Supreme Extremes (Taiji) that produce Two elementary Forms (Liang-yi). Those Two Forms produce Four emblematic Symbols (Si-xiang), which again produce Eight Trigrams (Ba-gua)."*

Master Shao-Zi of the Song Dynasty states:

> *"One divides into two; two divide into four; four divide into eight."*

In Chapter *Shuo-gua chuan* (Treatise on Remarks on the Trigrams) of the Great Appendix, it is said:

> *"In the Book of Changes we have the reverse or anticipatory (ni) process of numbering." In this sense of the term, Master Shao-zi contended that "Qian corresponds to one; Dui to two; Li to three; Zhen to four; Xun to five; Kan to six; Gen to seven; Kun to eight. From Qian (1) and up to Kun (8) there is no place for the sequence of creation, as if the reverse process of anticipation (ni) is going to last the four forthcoming watches (eight hours, from the first to the last). Then the sixty-four figures set the matter."*

In Chapter *Shuo-gua chuan* of the Great Appendix, it is said:

> *According to the sequence of Fu Xi, the symbols of heaven and earth receive their determinate positions above and below; those for mountain and marsh interchange their influence; those for thunder and wind excite each other increasingly; and those for water and fire do each other no harm. A mutual communication is established among the eight symbols due to their transverse interactions (cuo), which makes the Eight Trigrams transform into the sixty-four figures, embracing all myriad things and conditions. The numbering of the past in a direct way (shun) is a natural process; the knowledge of the future is anticipation (ni). In order to prognosticate upcoming events we have to resort to anticipation."*

Master *Shao-Zi* states:

> *"Qian correlates with south, Kun with north; Li corresponds to east while Kan to west; Zhen is located at northeast while Dui at southeast; Xun correlates with southwest while Gen with northwest. Numbering of the past from Zhen (4) to Qian (1) is the natural process in the direct way (shun), while numbering of the forthcoming future from Xun (5) to Kun (8) is anticipation (ni). The sixty-four figures set this issue in order."*

2. *Treatise on the sequence of the Eight Trigrams*

The sequence running from *Qian* {1} to *Dui* {2}, *Li* {3}, *Zhen* {4}, and then to *Xun* {5}, *Kan* {6}, *Gen* {7} and *Kun* {8} denotes the natural process {*shun*}. As for the other parts of the sequence, according to Fu Xi, *Zhen* {4} is not followed by *Xun* {4} because the *Xun* trigram is located in the southwest, near *Qian* {1}, and gradually proceeds toward *Kun* {8}. The sector that includes *Xun* {5}, *Kan* {6}, *Gen* {7} and *Kun* {8} relates to anticipation (*ni*) or a reverse numbering oriented to the future. Therefore in the Book of Changes we have both reverse or anticipating, and both the natural or direct processes.

The completed process of the Eight Trigrams is known as the numbering of the past (from one to two, three, four, five, six, seven and eight, by adding more lines in the natural order mentioned here, i.e. one after another). Therefore this numbering of the past is called natural (*shun*). Processes in the Eight Trigrams which are still incomplete are known as the numbering of the forthcoming future and initially consists of adding one line above another strong line (*yang*) to make the Old *Yang* figure. Once another line is added above Old *Yang*, we have the pure *yang* trigram known as *Qian* allocated to heaven. The process of adding lines in sequence from bottom to top is known as the reverse or anticipation (*ni*). Therefore it is said, "The knowledge of the upcoming is anticipation."

3. Treatise on the yearly climate according to the Eight Trigrams arrangement

The sequence running from the Zi (1) to Chou (2), Yin (3), Mao (4), Chen (5), *Si* (6) and Wu (7) signs is known as the natural process of the past (shun). According to the sequence of Fu Xi, *Qian* is at ease and at rest in the position under Wu (7). Reversing to Zi (1) through *Qian*, *Dui*, *Li* and *Zhen* is known as the numbering of the future or anticipation (*ni*). The Fu Xi arrangement of the Eight Trigrams performs all the abilities or skills of the horizontal diagram in a very natural way, wherein *Qian* correlates with one, *Dui* corresponds to two, *Li* to three, *Zhen* to four, *Xun* to five, *Kan* to six, *Gen* to seven and *Kun* to eight. The naturalness of this arrangement is quite astonishing and beyond words. Nevertheless, the two halves of the diagram share a number of different relationships, such as 'direct intercourse,' 'inversion,' 'transverse interrelation' and so on, through which doubts regarding the accuracy of some positions in the pre-birth arrangement sequence of figures may be settled. Due to universality of the chart, the other lines and figures follow in sequence.

4. Treatise on the location of Qian and Kun

According to the sequence of Fu Xi, the figure *Qian* is placed above in the southern position as the true ruler, that is, the Sovereign. At the Sovereign's left there are two strong or undivided lines at the top of *Xun* and one strong line in the middle of *Kan* at the west. To his right lie two strong lines at the bottom of *Dui* and another two strong lines at the bottom and top of *Li* at the east. These lines form the image of three dukes and nine central government officials waiting in a row for an audience with the Emperor.

Kun is placed below at the northerly position as the true Empress. On her left there are two weak or divided lines at the top of *Zhen* and another weak line in the middle of *Li*. To her right lie two weak lines at the bottom of *Gen* and another two weak lines at the bottom and top of *Kan*. These lines form the image of three imperial concubines and nine ladies-in-waiting standing by to provide service.

5. Treatise on the matching of man and woman

The figure *Qian* correlates with *Kun* as a matched pair of father and mother. *Zhen* corresponds to *Xun* as the oldest son paired with the oldest daughter. *Kan* corresponds to *Li* as the second son matched with the second daughter. *Gen* correlates with *Dui* as the youngest son matched with the youngest daughter.

6. Treatise on Qian and Kun through the principle of playing the flute

Through manipulation, the bottom line of *Kun* moves to change *Kun* into *Zhen*. Similarly, the bottom line of *Qian* moves to transform *Qian* into *Xun*. This means that the oldest son, symbolising *Zhen*, and the oldest daughter, symbolising *Xun*, stimulate and influence each other like two flutists playing together.

In the same way, the middle line of *Kun* moves to change *Kun* into *Kan*, while the middle line of *Qian* moves to turn *Qian* into *Li*. Symbolically, this is portrayed as the second son (*Kan*) and the second daughter (*Li*) easily influencing each other, again like two musicians playing the flute for each other's pleasure.

Lastly, the top line of *Kun* moves to change *Kun* into *Gen*; whilst the top line of *Qian* turns *Qian* into *Dui*. This denotes that the youngest son (*Gen*) and the youngest daughter (*Dui*) exchange influences like two muscians communicating to each other by flute.

12 • Horizontal diagram of the Eight Trigrams doubled to make the sixty-four figures according to the Yang form

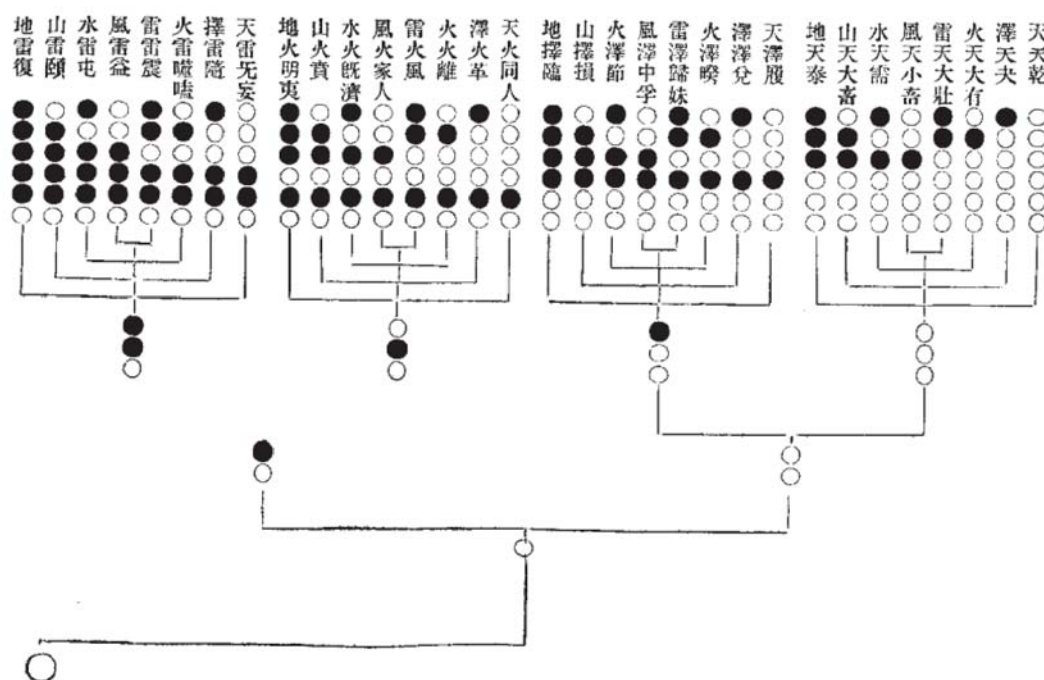


Fig. 0.12.1 Diagram of the Eight Trigrams doubled to make the sixty-four figures according to the Yang form

Each trigram is placed above itself and to all others until sixty-four figures are formed. All the Eight Trigrams are arranged in a very natural way in this sequence: *Qian* {1}, *Dui* {2}, *Li* {3}, *Zhen* {4}, *Xun* {5}, *Kan* {6}, *Gen* {7} and *Kun* {8}. They are also arranged in strict correlation between trigrams and numbers based on the arrangement of Fu Xi.

Since the number one corresponds to *Qian* {1}, *Qian* is placed at the first position. The second position is allocated to Dui, so *Dui* follows *Qian* as the second figure. The third position belongs to Li, hence *Li* follows *Dui* as the third number. The fourth position corresponds to *Zhen* {4}, the *Xun* figure to five. The sixth position belongs to Kan, the seventh to *Gen* and

the eighth to Kun. It is that simple. Moreover, starting from *Qian* {1} and up to *Kun* {8}, the Eight Trigrams form eight single Chambers with the above-mentioned sequence of figures in each. Thus we can see the sixty-four figures set in order throughout all the eight Chambers, with no need for the sages to add or deduct from the chart.

13 • Horizontal diagram of the Eight Trigrams doubled to make the sixty-four figures according to the yin form

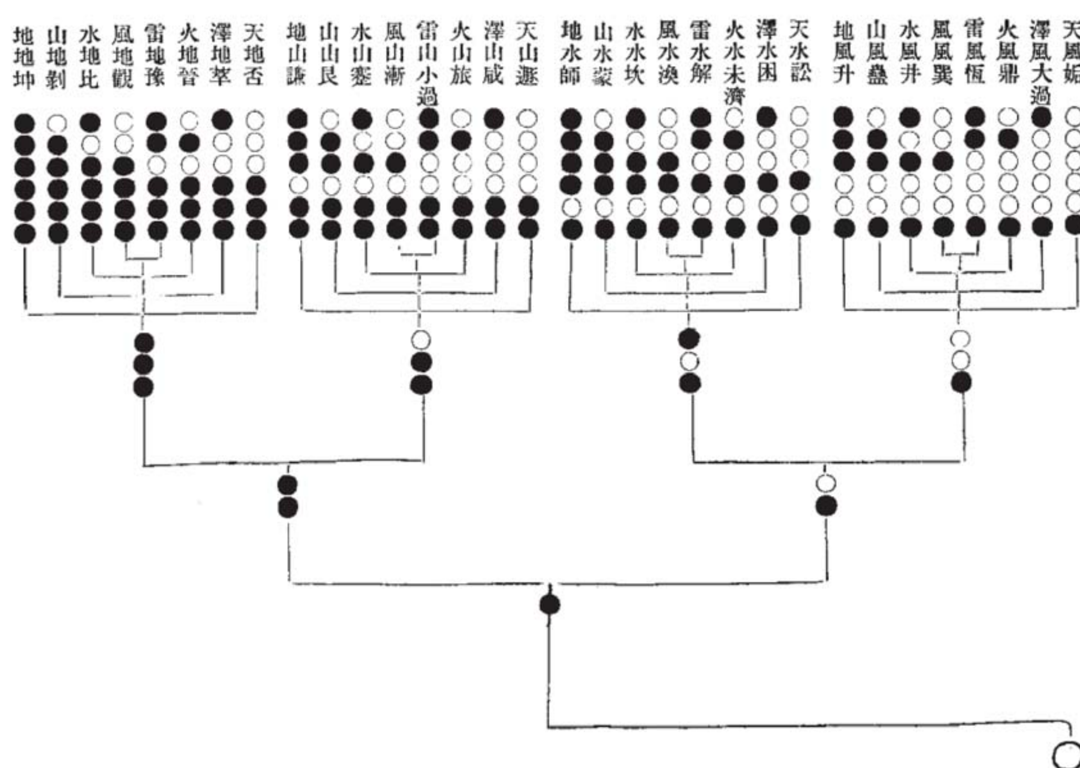


Fig. 0.13.1 Diagram of the Eight Trigrams doubled to make the sixty-four figures according to the yin form

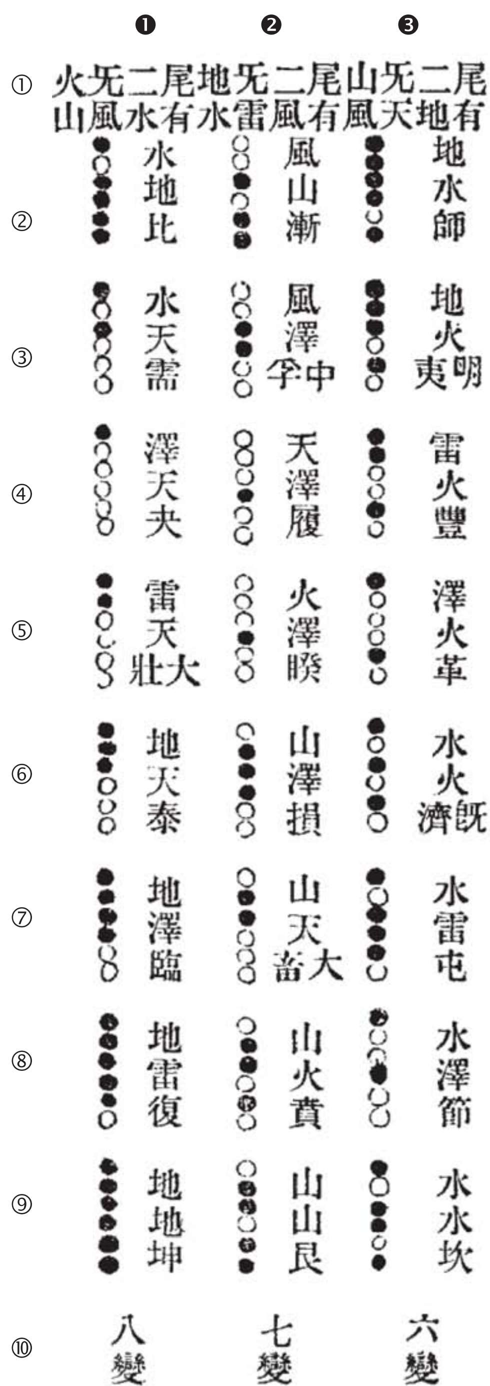
14 • Illustrated explanations of the Eight Trigrams doubled to make the sixty-four figures



Fig. 0.14.1 Diagram of the Eight Trigrams doubled to make the sixty-four figures

	❶	❷	❸	❹	❺	❻
①	**Two Mountains at the end, no Marsh, water, earth**	**Two Marshes at the end, no Mountain, fire, heaven**	**Two heavens at the end, no earth, Marsh, Thunder**	**Two Thunders at the end, no Wind, heaven, fire**	**Two fires at the end, no water, Thunder, Marsh**	
②	Gu (18)	Sui (17)	Tong Ren (13)	Gui Mei (54)	Da You (14)	**Return to initial position**
③	Yi (27)	Da Guo (28)	Song (6)	Xiao Guo (62)	Jin (35)	**Second change of the 4th Line**
④	Shi He (21)	Jing (48)	Huan (59)	Qian (15)	Bo (23)	**The 5th line changes**
⑤	Wu Wang (25)	Sheng (46)	Meng (4)	Jian (39)	Guan (20)	**The 4th line changes**
⑥	Yi (42)	Heng (32)	Wei Ji (64)	Xian (31)	Pi (12)	**The 3rd line changes**
⑦	Ren Jia (37)	Jie (40)	Ding (50)	Cui (45)	Dun (33)	**The 2nd line changes**
⑧	Xiao Xu (9)	Yu (16)	Lü (56)	Kun (47)	Gou (44)	**The bottom line change**
⑨	Xun (57)	Zhen (51)	Li (30)	Dui (58)	Qian (1)	
⑩	**5th change**	**4th change**	**3rd change**	**2nd change**	**1st change**	

Fig. 0.14.2 Diagram of the Eight Trigrams doubled to make the sixty-four figures (Translation)



	❶	❷	❸
①	**Two waters at the end, no Wind, fire, Mountain**	**Two Winds at the end, no Thunder, earth, water**	**Two earths at the end, no heaven, Mountain, Wind**
②	Bi (8)	Jian (53)	Shi (7)
③	Xu (5)	Zhong Fu (61)	Ming Yi (36)
④	Guai (43)	Li (10)	Feng (55)
⑤	Da Zhuang (34)	Guai (38)	Ge (49)
⑥	Tai (11)	Sun (41)	Ji Ji (63)
⑦	Lin (19)	Da Xu (26)	Zhun (3)
⑧	Fu (24)	Bi (22)	Jie (60)
⑨	Kun (2)	*Gen* (52)	Kan (29)
⑩	**8th change**	**7th change**	**6th change**

Fig. 0.14.3 Diagram of the Eight Trigrams doubled to make the sixty-four figures (cont'd)

The Eight Trigrams chart above is a tabled summary of the Supreme Extremes (*Taiji*), the Two Forms (*Liang-yi*), the Four Symbols (*Si-xiang*) and the Eight Trigrams (*Ba-gua*). As stated in the *Xi-ci Zhuan* or Great Appendix to the Book of Changes, the sixty-four figures are a result of changes (*bian*), from which the symbols of the Eight Trigrams appear in full among the hexagrams or six-line figures, embracing all myriad things and cases.

Some of the lines (*yao*) double up, others are strong or weak and stimulate each other through the changes. For example, the bottom line of *Qian* moves to transform *Qian* into Xun; the bottom and middle lines of *Qian* move to turn it into *Gen*; and all three lines of *Qian* move to transform the entire figure into the *Kun* trigram. Taking *Kun* as another example, moving its bottom line turn *Kun* into Zhen; moving its bottom and middle lines change *Kun* into Dui; and moving all three lines turns it into Qian. This process is known as 'the strong and the weak lines stimulat[ing] each other through the changes.'

By doubling the trigrams we get the six-line figures, which are then multiplied to form the sixty-four hexagrams. Therefore each six-line figure goes through six different changes in order to return to its original form, whilst the the seventh change of the bottom line brings the entire figure to the eighth change. Thus eight changes multiplied by the eight trigrams come to a total of sixty-four. Observing the wonderful transformations of *yin* and *yang* substances of heaven and earth, the sages of antiquity decided to name them by Changes (*yi*), just as the Confucian scholars of the Song-period stated that, "One divides into two, two into four, four into eight, eight into sixteen, sixteen into thirty-two, thirty-two into sixty-four."

If the number sixty-four is the ultimate or last number, why does the Book of Changes consist of sixty-four impenetrable figures? When the Eight Trigrams were added each to itself and to all the others until the sixty-four hexagrams were formed, the sages of old saw the wonderful transformations reflected in Nature through the interactions between the *yin* and *yang* substances.

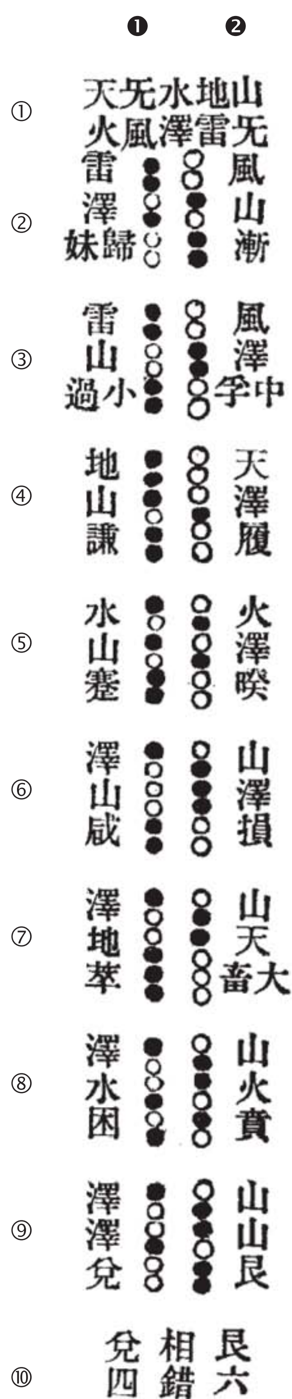
15 • Diagram of the transverse interrelation of the sixty-four figures



Fig. 0.15.1 Diagram of the transverse interrelation of the sixty-four figures

	❶	❷	❸	❹	❺	❻
①	**Wind, no Marsh, water, Mountain**	**Thunder, no Mountain, fire, heaven**	**Fire, no earth, marsh, Thunder**	**Water, no heaven, Mountain, Wind**	**Earth, no Wind, fire, Mountain**	**Heaven, no water, Thunder, Marsh**
②	Gu (18)	Sui (17)	Tong Ren (13)	Shi (7)	Bi (8)	Da You (14)
③	Yi (42)	Da Guo (28)	Song (6)	Ming Yi (36)	Xu (5)	Jin (35)
④	Shi He (21)	Jing (48)	Huan (59)	Feng (55)	Guai (43)	Bo (23)
⑤	Wu Wang (25)	Sheng (46)	Meng (4)	Ge (49)	Da Zhuang (34)	Guan (20)
⑥	Yi (42)	Heng (32)	Wei Ji (64)	Ji Ji (63)	Tai (11)	Pi (12)
⑦	Ren Jia (37)	Jie (40)	Ding (50)	Zhun (3)	Lin (19)	Dun (33)
⑧	Xiao Xu (9)	Yu (16)	Lü (56)	Jie (60)	Fu (24)	Gou (44)
⑨	Xun (57)	Zhen (51)	Li (30)	Kan (29)	Kun (2)	Qian (1)
⑩	**Thunder (8) is compatible with Xun (2)**		**Kan (7) is compatible with Li (3)**		**Qian (9) is compatible with Kun (1)**	

Fig. 0.15.2 Diagram of the transverse interrelation of the sixty-four figures (Translation)



	❶	❷
①	**Marsh, no Wind, heaven, fire**	**Mountain, no earth, Thunder, water**
②	Gui Mei (54)	Jian (53)
③	Xiao Guo (62)	Zhong Fu (61)
④	Qian (15)	Li (10)
⑤	Jian (39)	Guai (38)
⑥	Xian (31)	Sun (41)
⑦	Cui (45)	Da Xu (26)
⑧	Kun (47)	Bi (22)
⑨	Dui (58)	Gen (52)
⑩	**Gen (6) is compatible with Dui (4)**	

Fig. 0.15.3 Diagram of the transverse interrelation of the sixty-four figures (cont'd)

16 • Diagram of direct intercourse and inversion of the two end figures in the eight chambers

According to arrangement of Fu Xi, heaven and earth, water and fire are placed in the four cardinal directions and are therefore compatible.

Two figures at the end of each Chamber are mutually inversed.
Heaven determines fire and earth of the Jin (35) hexagram;
Heaven determines fire and heaven of the Da You (14) hexagram.
Earth determines water and heaven of the Xu (5) hexagram;
Earth determines water and earth of the Bi (8) hexagram.

Earth and fire of the inversed water make the Ming Yi (36) hexagram;
Heaven and fire of the inversed fire make the Tong Ren (13) hexagram;
Heaven and water of the inversed fire make the Song (6) hexagram;
Earth and water of the inversed water make the Shi (7) hexagram.

Wind, thunder, mountain and marsh are placed in the Four Corners and therefore inversed.

Two figures at the end of each Chamber are mutually compatible.

Marsh and Wind of Thunder make the Da Guo (28) hexagram;
Marsh and Thunder of Thunder make the Sui (17) hexagram.
Wind and Marsh of Mountain make the Zhong Fu (61) hexagram;
Wind and Mountain of Mountain make the Jian (53) hexagram.

Mountain and thunder of the compatible wind make the Yi (27) hexagram;
Mountain and wind of the compatible wind make the Gu (18) hexagram;
Thunder and mountain of the compatible marsh make the Xiao Guo (62) hexagram;
Thunder and marsh of the compatible marsh make the Gui Mei (54) hexagram.

17 ✦ Diagram 1: Sequence of the figures according to direct inversion

Fig. 0.17.1 Diagram 1: Sequence of the figures according to direct inversion

The direct inversion runs between the hexagrams belonging to *Qian* [from Gou (44) to Bo (23)] and the hexagrams belonging to *Kun*:

- Gou (44) — inverses into — Guai (43);
- Dun (33) — inverses into — Da Zhuang (34);
- Pi (12) — inverses into — Tai (11);
- Guan (20) — inverses into — Lin (19);
- Bo (23) — inverses into — Fu (24).

The reverse inversion runs between the hexagrams allocated to *Kun* [from Fu (24) to Guai (43)] and the hexagrams corresponding to *Qian*.

18 • Diagram 2: Sequence of the figures according to direct inversion

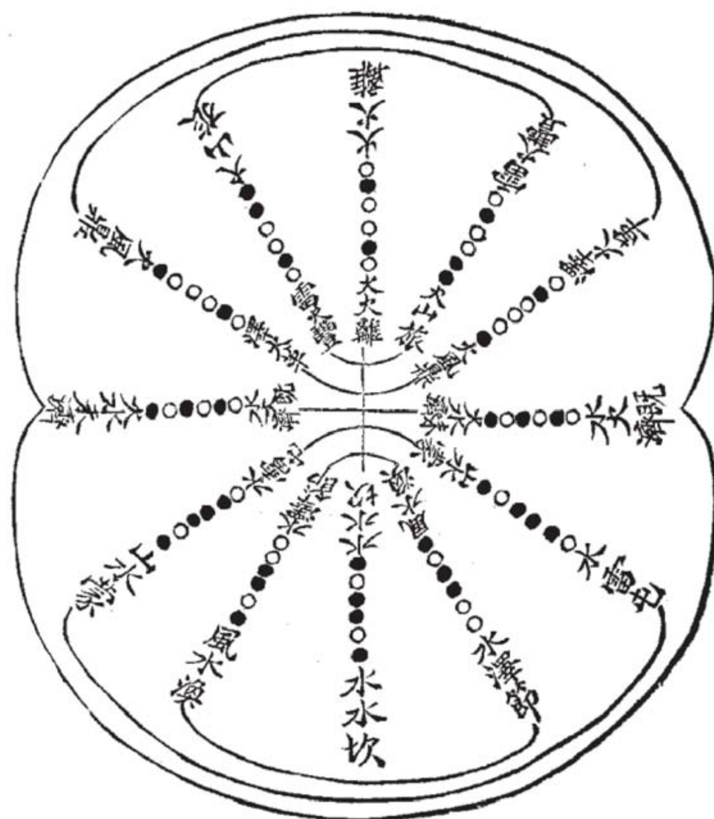


Fig. 0.18.1 Diagram 2: Sequence of the figures according to direct inversion

The direct inversion runs between the hexagrams allocated to *Kan* [from Jie (60) to Feng (55)] and the hexagrams corresponding to *Li*:

- Jie (60) — inverses into — Huan (59);
- Zhun (3) — inverses into — Meng (4);
- Ji Ji (63) — inverses into — Wei Ji (64);
- Ge (49) — inverses into — Ding (50);
- Feng (55) — inverses into — Lu (56).

The reverse inversion runs between the hexagrams belonging to *Li* [from Lü (56) to Huan (59)] and the hexagrams belonging to *Kan*.

19 ✦ Diagram 3: Sequence of the figures according to direct inversion

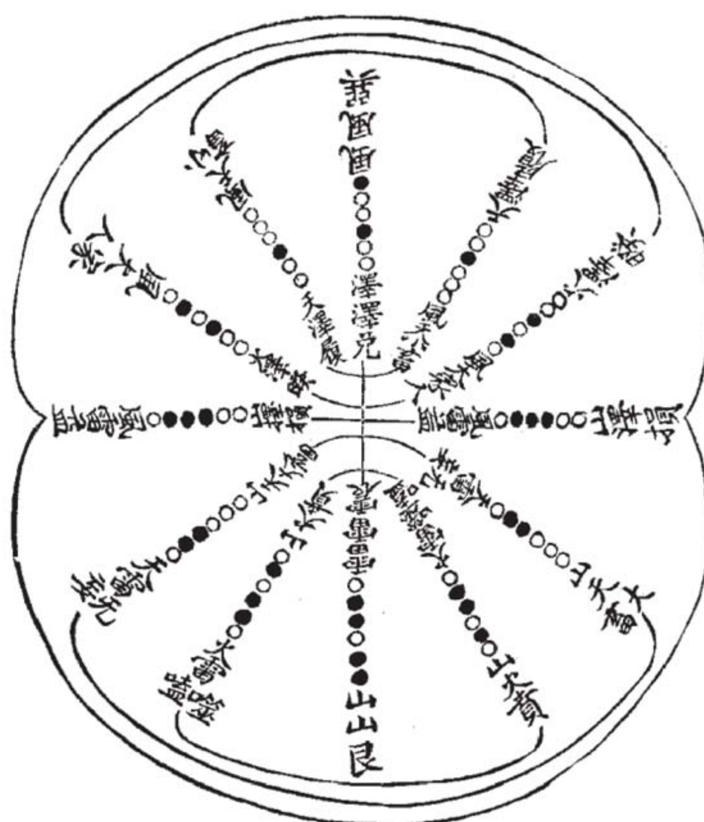


Fig. 0.19.1 Diagram 3: Sequence of the figures according to direct inversion

The direct inversion runs between the hexagrams belonging to *Gen* [from Bi (22) to Fu (24)) and the hexagrams belonging to *Xun*:

- Bi (22) — synthesizes with — Shi He (21);
- Da Xu (26) — synthesizes with — Wu Wang (25);
- Sun (41) — synthesizes with — Yi (42);
- Guai (38) — synthesizes with — Jia Ren (37);
- Li (10) — synthesizes with — Xiao Xu (9).

The inversion runs between the hexagrams belonging to *Xun* [from Xiao Xu (9) to Shi He (21)] and the hexagrams belonging to *Gen*.

20 ✦ Diagram 4: Sequence of the figures according to direct inversion

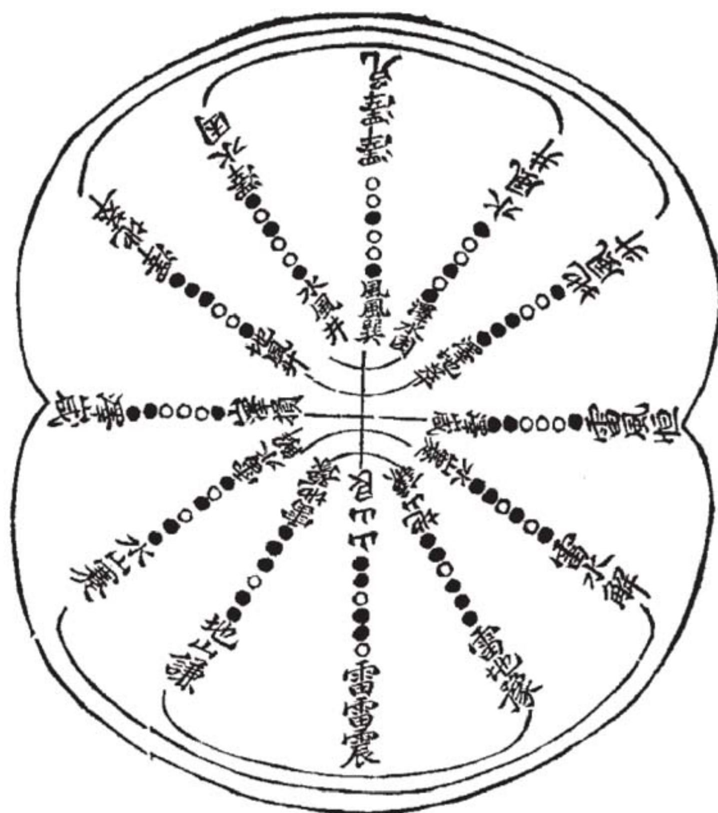


Fig. 0.20.1 Diagram 4: Sequence of the figures according to direct inversion

The direct inversion runs between the hexagrams belonging to *Zhen* [from Yu (16) to Jing (48)] and the hexagrams belonging to marsh:

- Yu (16) — inverses into — Qian (15);
- Jie (40) — inverses into — Jian (39);
- Heng (32) — inverses into — Xian (31);
- Sheng (46) — inverses into — Cui (45);
- Jing (48) — inverses into — Kun (47).

The reverse inversion runs between the hexagrams belonging to *Dui* [from *Kun* (47) to Jian (39)] and the hexagrams belonging to *Zhen*.

21 ✦ Illustrated explanations of the inversion of the sixty-four figures

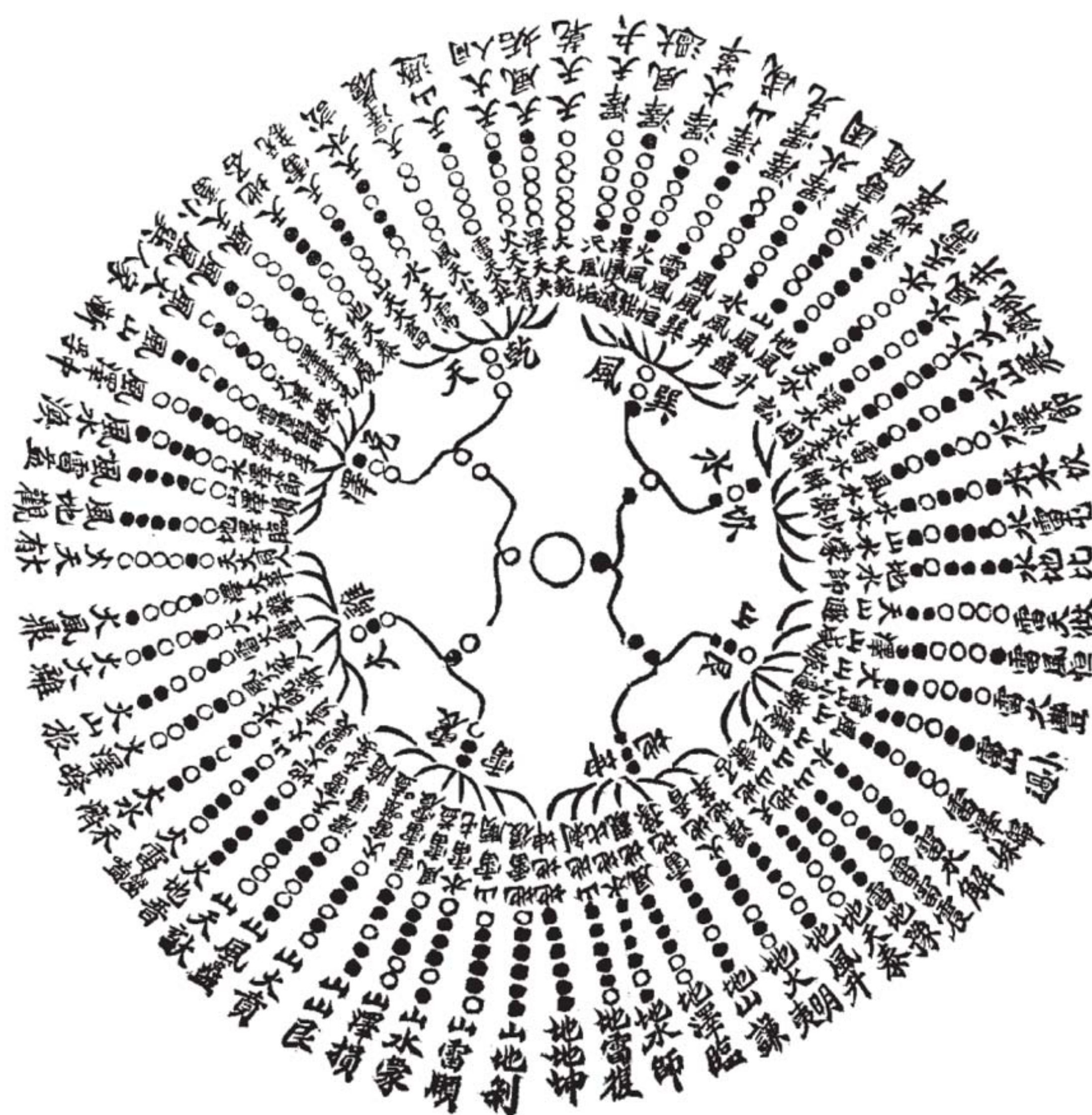


Fig. 0.21.1 Diagram of the inversion of the sixty-four figures

This diagram is charted according to the sequence of Fu Xi, which is arranged as follows: heaven (1), marsh (2), fire (3), thunder (4), wind (5), water (6), mountain (7), earth (8).

Still, the sequence of heaven (1), marsh (2), fire (3), thunder (4), wind (5), water (6), mountain (7) and earth (8) conforms sequentially with the reversibly inversed sequence of Qian (1), Kun (2), Kan (29), Li (30), the four backbone figures and the four cross hexagrams: Yi (27), Da Guo (28), Zhong Fu (61), Xiao Guo (62).

All the eight hexagrams are compatible in nature, while the rest of the fifty-six hexagrams are inversed for twenty-eight figures. Hence, twenty-eight plus the eight compatible hexagrams make a total of thirty-six. This is why Master Shao-Zi states:

> *"The thirty-six Chambers correlate with spring. Eight divide into sixteen, sixteen divide into thirty-two, thirty-two divide into sixty-four. Especially in this emblematic regularity we see the natural manifestation of all that is wonderful."*

The preceding diagram (Fig. 0.21.1) charts the reversibly inversed sixty-four hexagrams, while the diagram which follows (Fig. 0.22.1) represents the reversibly compatible sixty-four hexagrams. The latter diagram also explains the relationship between the six stratums of big and small circles of the silk-reeling method of *Taijiquan*. This consists, on the one hand, of the six levels of the human body, including skin, flesh, tendons, membranes, joints and brains; and on the other hand, the circulation and compatibility of the blood (*xue*) and energy (*qi*) flows. It also includes the agglomeration of the internal essence (*jing*)[9] and spirit (*shen*)[10], through which the practitioner can lift up and sink down, enter inside and go outside of a circular frame, the size of which depends on the time of utmost effectiveness. Through the wisdom of everyday living one can also enter into the all-embracing spheres of self-regulation cultivated through the wisdom of everyday living.

[9] *Jing* essence can be translated as sexual energy. It is the original *qi* passed on to us by our parents and hence also known as pre-birth *qi*.
[10] *Shen* denotes one's spiritual self. When the spirit is raised to the head, one's vitality can be seen by the brightness of the eyes.

22 • Diagram of Taiji giving birth to the compatible 128 figures

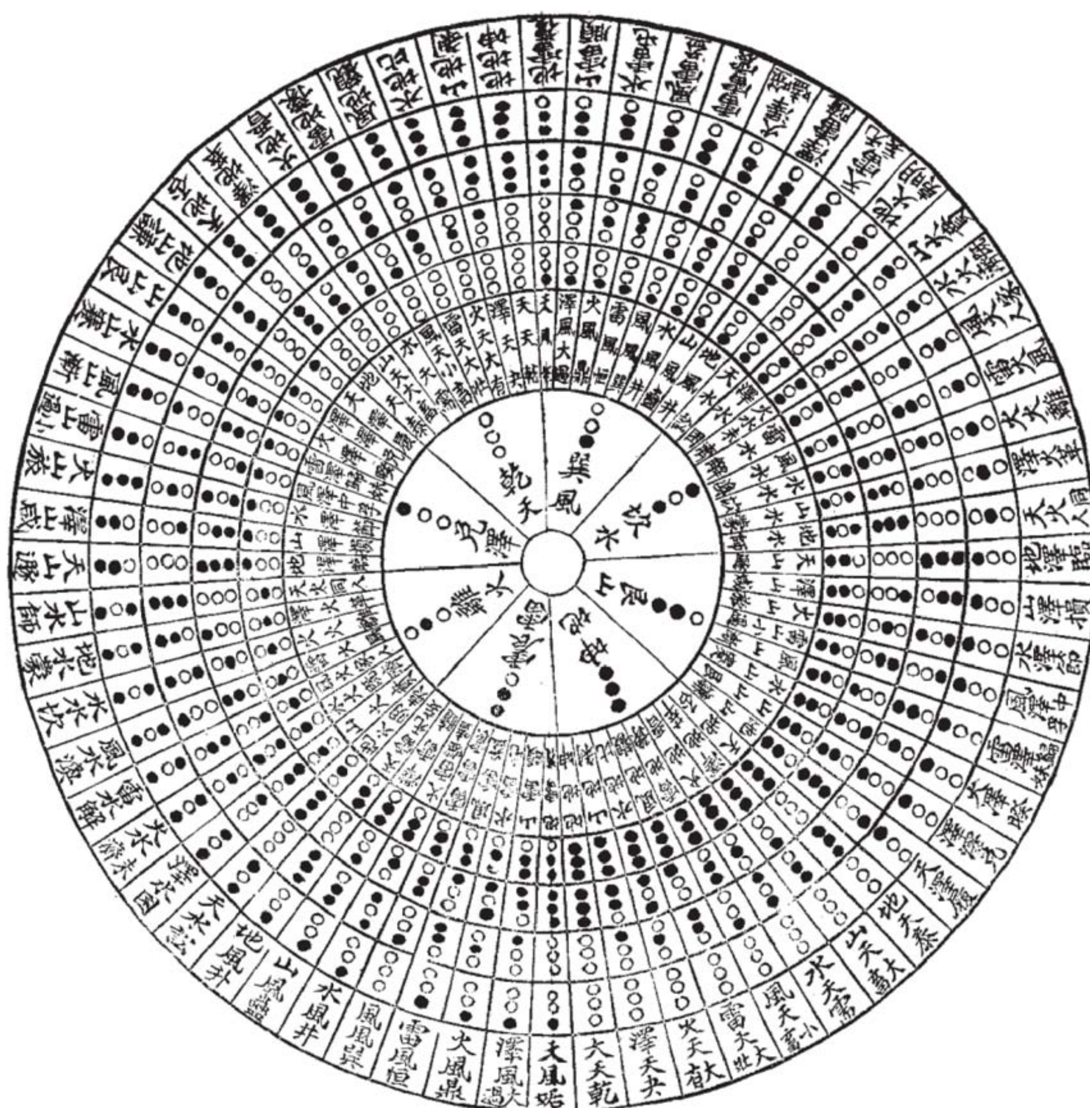


Fig. 0.22.1 Diagram of Taiji giving birth to the compatible 128 figures

One inner and twelve outer circles represent 32 of *yang* and 32 of *Yin;*

Two inner and eleven outer circles represent 16 of *yang* and 16 of *Yin*.

Three inner and ten outer circles represent eight of *yang* and eight of *Yin;*

Four inner and nine outer circles represent four of *yang* and four of *Yin*.

Five inner and eight outer circles represent two of *yang* and two of *Yin;*

Six inner and seven outer circles represent one of *yang* and one of *Yin*.

The Book of Changes states:

> *"The successive movement of one yin and one yang constitutes what is called the course of things, the way of heaven or Dao."*

It is also said that to return to one's true roots and completion of one's Living mission means to concentrate the *yin* and *yang* into One, and to return then to heaven.

23 ✦ Diagram on the determinate positions of heaven and earth performed through intersection

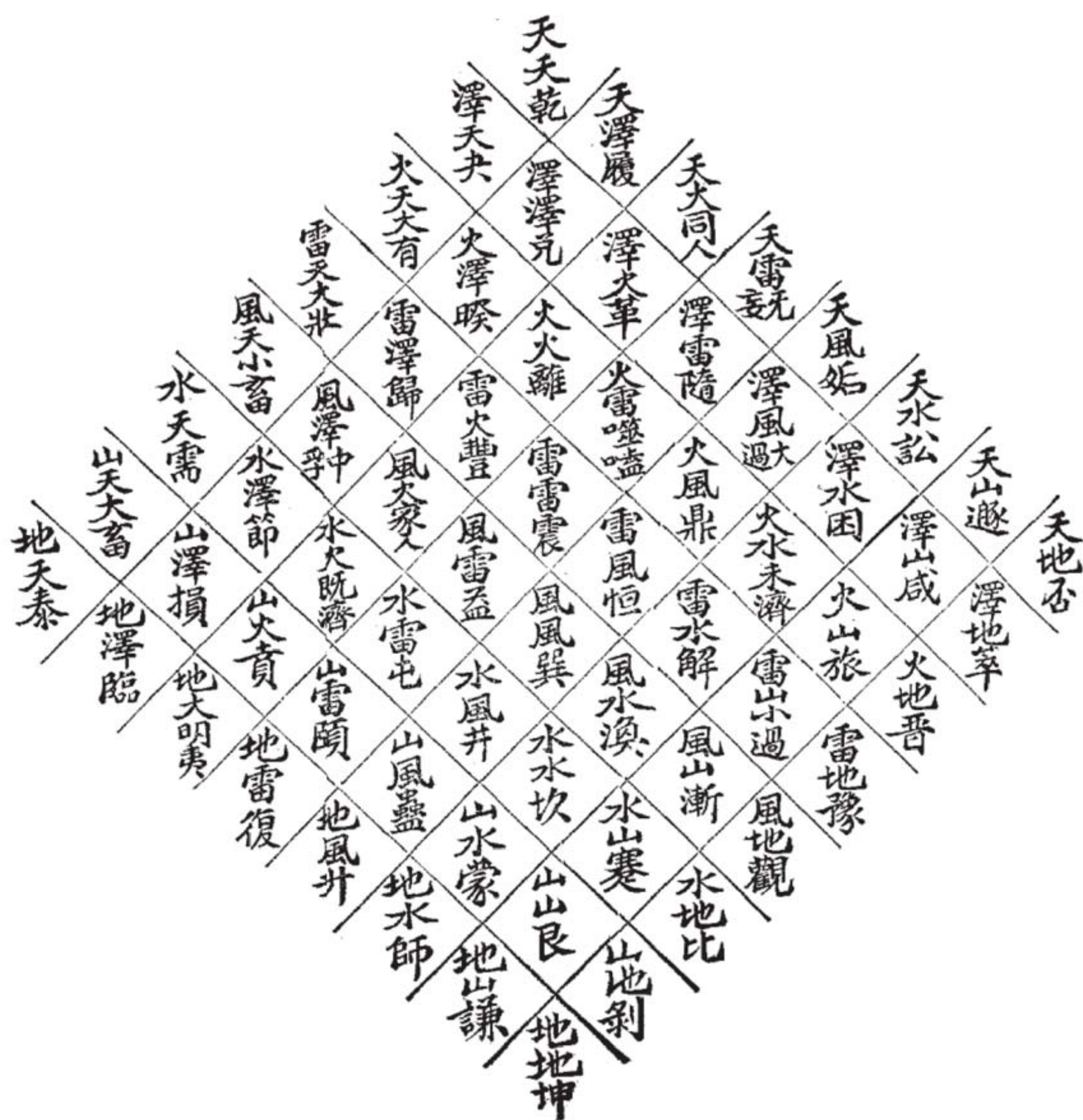


Fig. 0.23.1 Diagram on the determinate positions of heaven and earth performed through intersection

In the Book of Changes it is said:

> *"According to the sequence of Fu Xi, the symbols of heaven and earth received their determinate positions[11]; those for mountain and marsh interchange their influence; those for thunder and wind stimulate each other further; and those for water and fire do each other no harm."*

This is what the square chart (Fig. 0.23.1) is all about.

Examinination of the explanations given in the Great Appendix to the Book of Changes show us that what is attributed to the past is known by the term '*shun*,' the natural or pre-birth oriented numbering. Conversely, knowledge of the future is called 'prognosticating,' hence the reverse or consequently oriented numbering in the Book of Changes is termed '*ni*.' The terms for numbering in the Book are both anticipatory, that is consequential, and natural (or antecedent), processes, and they are used as clues to the profound. As these concepts are quite difficult to grasp through verbal transmission, deeper understanding may be attained through contemplation of questions such as "Why I was born here?" and "What mission do I have to complete in this world to return to heaven?" Without genuine understanding of these questions, human life loses its meaning and has no value at all. Every person has to create his fate according to the course pre-determined by heaven. Therefore it is said that numbering of the past is a natural process. This means that heaven and earth give birth to all the Six Sons arranged in sequence from the oldest to the youngest, top-down. This process is based on the principle of ceaseless reproduction from time immemorial, from unexplored history and the elusive past.

The knowledge of the upcoming is named anticipation (*ni*) or consequent numbering, and it is based on utilizing the power of the Six Sons[12] to change the future through the knowledge of the past. Due to variability of each *yang* or strong substance starting from the bottom line to the top-

[11] Heaven is above; earth is below.
[12] Six Sons refer to the other six trigrams (*gua*) in which heavenly and earthly substances are manifested in various forms.

most *yang* line, we can bring our lives to concord with the state of absolute harmony, and gradually achieve the highest rate of spirituality available through the practice of martial arts. Then the problem of killing the enemy vanishes by its own accord, as we become unable to kill others.

Shen (spirit) is the knowledge of forthcoming events. Therefore the Book of Changes is regarded as the greatest work among the Classics, for it contains numerous methods that help people return to heaven. This is what is meant by anticipation (*ni*) or the consequent process of development, for in order to prognosticate forthcoming events we must resort to anticipating order. Thus the consequent numbering is first about *Zhen* (thunder) and *Xun* (wind) and secondly about *Qian* (heaven) and *Kun* (earth).

Those who constantly follow the way of heaven are symbolized by the male. Hence, the perfected man becomes the emperor, the Son of heaven, the emblematic symbol of trigram *Qian*, the ruler of myriad things, boundless lands and many countries.

Those who constantly follow the way of earth are symbolized by the female. Consequently, the perfected woman becomes the empress, the emblematic symbol of the *Kun* trigram. The empress grants lives to all in the four cardinal directions and that is her mission. Her position is in the central place between heaven and earth and from there she gladly carries out Nature's vital mandate.

24 • Explanations of the Square Chart of the Male and Female Formation

The Book of Changes states, "…thus we have the stimulating forces of thunder and lightning, the fertilizing influences of wind and rain, and the revolutions of the sun and moon which give rise to cold and warmth. The attributes expressed by the way of Qian (1) constitute the male and those expressed by the way of Kun (2) constitute the female."

This is represented by the following square chart (Fig. 0.24.1).

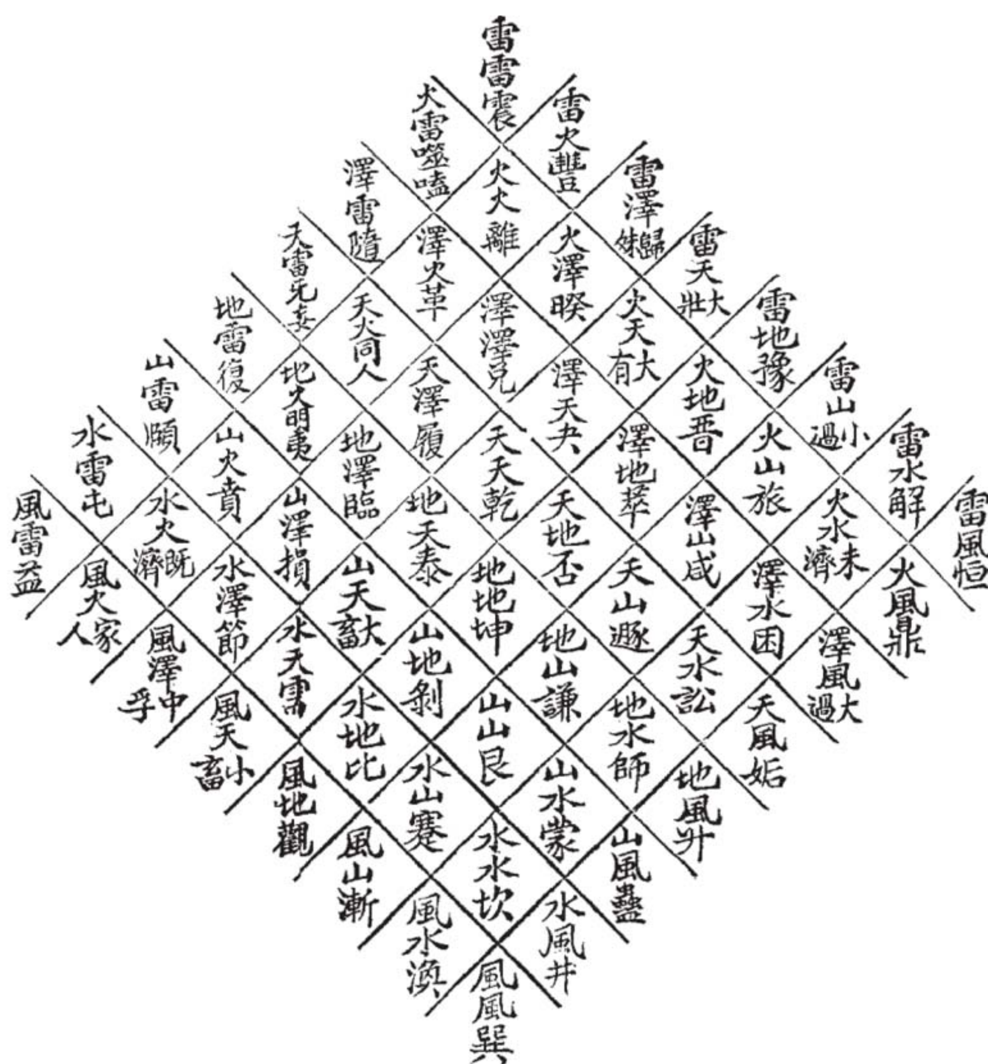


Fig. 0.24.1 Diagram of male and female formation

At the core, all universal interactions and changes amount to fifty. This is the number through which we study the Book of Changes, and in doing so, we try to study anticipatory or consequential numbering.

Research of the consequential numbering is based on the concept of One Center and Four Corners, wherein the odd number five associates with the even number ten[13]. The Four Corners represents the four elements — wind, thunder, mountain and marsh, and this respresentation allows the study of the Changes through the system of the number five. The four cardinal directions are depicted by heaven, earth, water and fire and allow the study of the Changes through the system of the number ten.

The circular diagram in Fig. 0.21.1 embodies the odd numbers symbolizing heaven, *yang* and brightness. As a counterpoint to this, the square chart embodies the even numbers, symbolising earth, *yin* and darkness. Hence there is an interplay between the corners and the directions, wherein the corners transform into directions, and directions transform into corners. The eight clear figures[14] are placed in a top-down vertical axis, while the axis of the eight cross-hexagrams lie in an east-west direction, pivoting around the tight knot or cross in the center. The corners of the number five system intersect each other at the center.

According to the natural process or antecedent numbering (*shun-shu*), figures *Qian* and *Kun* contain the Six Sons, whereby *Qian* and *Kun* are placed in the outer circle and are great, whilst the Six Sons remain in the inner circle and are very small. In the reverse process or consequent numbering (*ni-shu*), the Six Sons contain *Qian* and *Kun*, whereby the Six Sons are in the outer circle and are great, and *Qian* and *Kun* are placed in the inner circle and are very small. The placement and size of these figures are constantly in flux and may become highly complex and difficult to distinguish, as the antecedent numbering leaves traces of the waxing and waning of the transformative processes. In this situation, just practice silently and

[13] The Chinese character for ten resembles a 'cross' with four points or corners.
[14] Hexagrams.

experience the art of silent boxing – this will help you learn to react and defending yourself under similar circumstances.

Whilst there are a number of significant religious practices and belief systems in the world, including Islam, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Protestantism and atheism, their original philosophies have been greatly diluted and 'muddied' over the centuries by the onset of subdivisions into different sub-groups and schools of thought. Hence, whatever they may preach today or achievements they may have attained, these cannot extend above the all-embracing concepts of the Supreme Extremes (*Taiji*) and No Extremes (*Wuji*). Thus serious practioners of *Taijiquan* must exert themselves to the utmost to study and research the art.

25 • Illustrated explanations of the Ruler (Qian) and the Storekeeper (Kun)

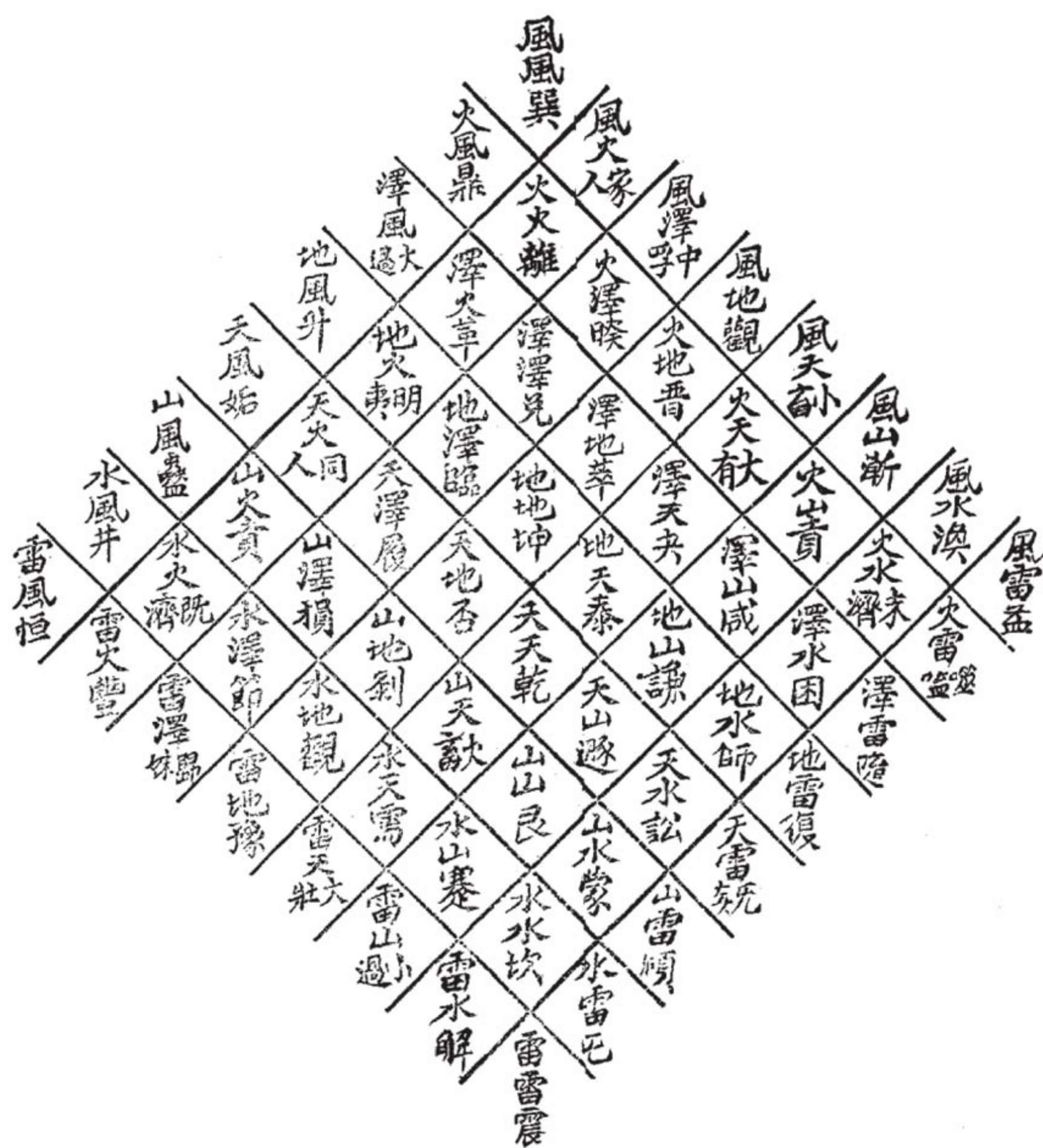


Fig. 0.25.1 Diagram of Ruler (Qian) and the Storekeeper (Kun)

The Book of Changes states, "Thunder serves to put all things in motion; wind to scatter their seeds; rain[15] to moisten them; the sun[16] to warm them. *Gen* (mountain) symbolizes the act of stopping and of keeping things at rest; *Dui* (marsh) symbolizes keeping things on a joyful course; *Qian* (heaven) signifies the ruling of things; and *Kun* (earth) symbolizes storing things. This is what the present square chart is all about."

The current chart (Fig. 0.25.1) reflects the words of Master Shao-Zi in one of his poems (see page 54), in which the terminals of the *Fu* (24) and *Gou* (44) figures are fixed. In the free-form style of his poetry he explains the preliminary sequence of the lines (*yao*) changing under the esteemed law of the transverse inter-relation, and the inversion of the odd and even numbers relating to heaven and earth. Nevertheless, despite the many commentaries existing to explain this phenomenum, these still fail to fully explain the process by which *yin* changes the one, two, three, four, five, six *yang* or strong lines, and how *yang* changes the one, two, three, four, five, six *yin* lines, or alternatively, the growth and decline of the weak lines. In addition, there is also the phenomenum of continuous circulation of fullness and emptiness under the sky. *Yang* relies on the sequence of *yang*, while *yin* counts on the arrangement of *yin*.

Different ways all lead to the same end. This is called the 'return to the *Dao*.' Using the influence or power of the heavenly numbers, earthly numbers can be changed. For example, an altered sequence can be depicted as a straight line gradually transforming from long connections to short; or as a crooked thread to a round one; or as the changes of big *yang* lines to small *yin* lines.

There are thirty-two figures of *yin* and thirty-two figures of *yang*, but there is only one purely *yang* figure (*Qian*), as well as one purely *yin* figure (*Kun*) in each group. The number of lines in the sixty-four *yin* and *yang* figures total three hundred and eighty-four lines, that is, six by sixty-four, hence incorporating the law of the intercalary[17] month.

[15] Rain refers to water.
[16] Sun refers to fire.
[17] Leap month of the lunar calendar.

26 • Diagram of heaven's origin and the moon's cavern



Fig. 0.26.1 Diagram of heaven's origin and the moon's cavern (top)

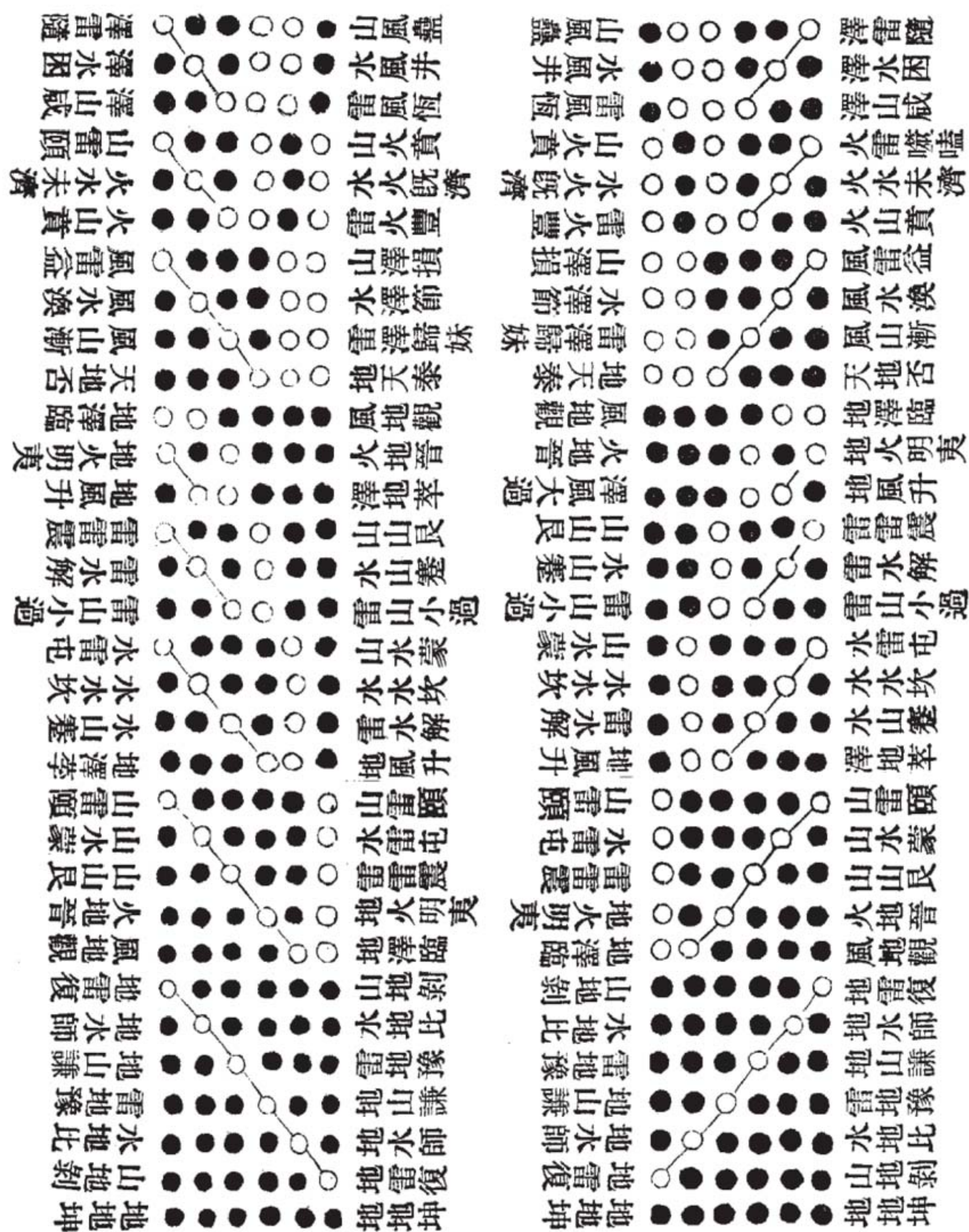


Fig. 0.26.2 Diagram of heaven's origin and the moon's cavern (bottom)

Translator's note:

In the three yang trigrams for thunder, water and mountain, that is, trigrams with undivided lines, more yin lines exist. Conversely, in the three yin trigrams for wind, fire and marsh, that is, trigrams with divided lines, there are more yang lines. The reason for this is due to the principle of one ruling over many, in other words, of a minority determining the majority. This is because yang lines are odd and consist of one stroke, while yin lines are even and consist of two strokes.

Master Shao-Zi composed a poem, which read like this:

> *"A high official has a very smart son*
> *Who is shaped like a wild goose;*
> *When Qian (heaven) meets with Xun (wind),*
> *He contemplates the moon's cavern and the earthly balance.*
>
> *Being endowed with genius, he is not impoverished,*
> *That's why he explores the moon's cavern.*
> *He realizes as well that men do not grasp heaven's origin.*
> *Who knows what will happen once men encounter thunder?*
> *Can they then see heaven's origin once more?*
> *Heaven's origin as well as the moon's cavern,*
> *Often come and go through the thirty-two*[18] *Chambers,*
> *Starting from springtime."*

Due to the limits of the print format, the circular diagram depicted in Fig. 0.21.1 has been used in place of the square chart to demonstrate the transverse interrelation of the strong and weak lines without having to resort to drawing extremely long lines.

The number of days in the intercalary month of the lunar calendar is arranged in such a way that each figure has its opposite pair fixed through inversion. Mutually compatible in transverse interrelation, the figures to-

[18] *Translator's correction*. Although the number is written as '36' in the original text, the correct number should be the sum total of the yin and yang hexagrams in each Chamber, which is 32. This is probably one of a number of typographical errors incurred during the reproduction of the original text.

tal two hundred and fifty-six or one thousand five hundred and thirty-six lines (that is, 256 x 6) for every nineteen years. There are seven intercalary months for every nineteen years of one single chapter[19]. According to laws based on this theory, there are one thousand five hundred and thirty-nine lines (*yao*). This means that a shortage of three lines is a result of deduction within a remainder of one, two or five. The amount of one hundred and fifty-two years of eight chapters (nineteen multiplied by eight), plus one intercalary month may be adopted into the Western calendar, which does not take into account the concept of the intercalary month.

When the moon's cavern meets with the Gou (44) figure, each transverse criss-cross comes through heaven's origin to appear at figure Fu (24), symbol of returning, and of the universal wish to return to safety after embarking on a journey undertaken without precaution but with trepidation, and losing one's way in the wrong paths.

Translator's note:

When the lunar year completes its cycle, the solar year is still incomplete. For every nineteen years there must be 7 intercalary months. This is known as heaven's compensation. Yang is active and exhaling. Yin is quiet and inhaling. The way of yang is constant abundance. The way of yin is constant deficiency. Such is the way of yin and yang. Heaven, being strong and virile, is active and creative. In one night and one day, it makes one complete revolution with some left over. The sun journeys to the south and the north. The moon has its comings and goings. If the sun did not move south and north, then there would be no winter and summer. If the moon did not go and come, then the lunar cycle would not be complete. The sage investigates changes in the moon's appearance and location as well as departures from its orbit. He only finds a norm in the constant rotation of the sun and moon, and in the order of male and female. He makes them the canonical model for all eternity. Therefore the Changes, from a more general perspective, comprise of heaven's origin, binding and securing it to what is to come.

[19] 'Chapter' refers to a measurement of time known as 'zhang'.

The six *yang* lines start their growth at Fu (24) but finish at Gou (44), while the six *yin* lines start their growth at Gou (44) and finish at Fu (24), going through transverse intercourse. The transverse intercourse forms a single huge circle.

The three *yang* start at Fu (24) but finish at Gu (18), while the three *yin* start at Gou (44) and finish at Sui (17). Both groups going through inversions made from two connective circles, each consisting of nine small circles. Heaven and earth receive their determinate positions above and below; water and fire are placed at the east and west, interacting with each other; thunder and mountain rise above earth; wind and marsh follow heaven. Thus light and heavy, emptiness and fullness, stillness and motion, all exist in the eight square sectors and are put forward totaling fifty, the number of the Great Expansion or Universal Changes which come and go indefinitely starting from springtime. As the Book of Changes states,

> *"The changes are determined as a result of the manipulation of strong and weak lines, denoting the intercourse and inversion of the heavenly and earthly numbers,until the necessary changes are completed in a way to form the figures pertaining to heaven and earth. Their terminal numbers are exactly defined, and the emblems of all things under the sky are properly fixed. If the Book of Changes was not the thing most capable of effecting change of all the things, how could it obtain a result such as this?"*

27 • Explanations of the vertical diagram of yang and the vertical diagram of yin according to the doctrine of growth and decline, fullness and emptiness

Growth and decline within the framework of *Taijiquan* lies in the principle of fullness and emptiness. The original system of the Four Achievements (*Si-de*) can be explained in more detail through the guidelines of the eight techniques of hand-to-hand combat. These techniques include Jie or receiving and picking up the opponent's hand; Yin or yielding and attracting into; Jin, advancing; Zhuan or turning around and changing direction; Ji, punching or hitting; Xu, clutching or grasping the opponent's body; Liu, arrest or restraint by utilizing a small portion of one's strength; and Ting, stoppage, when an opponent is not allowed to come at close-range and cause damage to one's space and posture, but kept at a proper distance.

a) Vertical diagram of yang according to the doctrine of growth and decline, fullness and emptiness

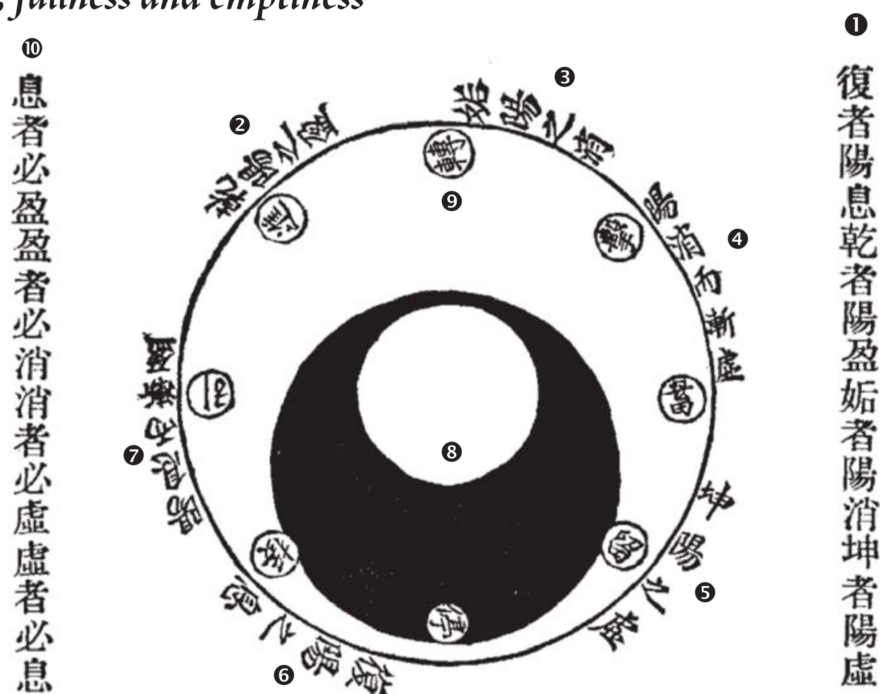


Fig. 0.27.1 Vertical diagram of yang according to the doctrine of growth and decline, fullness and emptiness

Inscription at right:

❶ at Fu (24) the *yang* lines start to increase; at Qian (1)the *yang* lines are in full; at Gou (44) *yang* lines start to wane; at Kun (2) the *yang* lines are gone.

Inscriptions around the circle:

❷ *Jie* corresponds to northeast; *yang* of Fu (24) is still at rest, but has already woken up;

❸ *Yin* corresponds to east; *yang* starts to grow slowly;

❹ *Jin* corresponds to southeast; *yang* of Qian (1) is in full;

❺ *Zhuan* corresponds to south; *yang* of Gou (44) starts to decline;

❻ *Ji* corresponds to southwest; *yang* declines and gradually enters into emptiness;

❼ *Xu* corresponds to west; *yang* of Kun (2) is empty;

❽ *Liu* corresponds to northwest; *yang* is gone;

❾ *Ting* corresponds to north; *yang* is at rest.

Inscription at left:

❿ all that is on the increase must become full; all that is full must become empty; all that is going to die out must then disappear; all that is gone must then be re-born.

b) Vertical diagram of yin according to the doctrine of growth and decline, fullness and emptiness

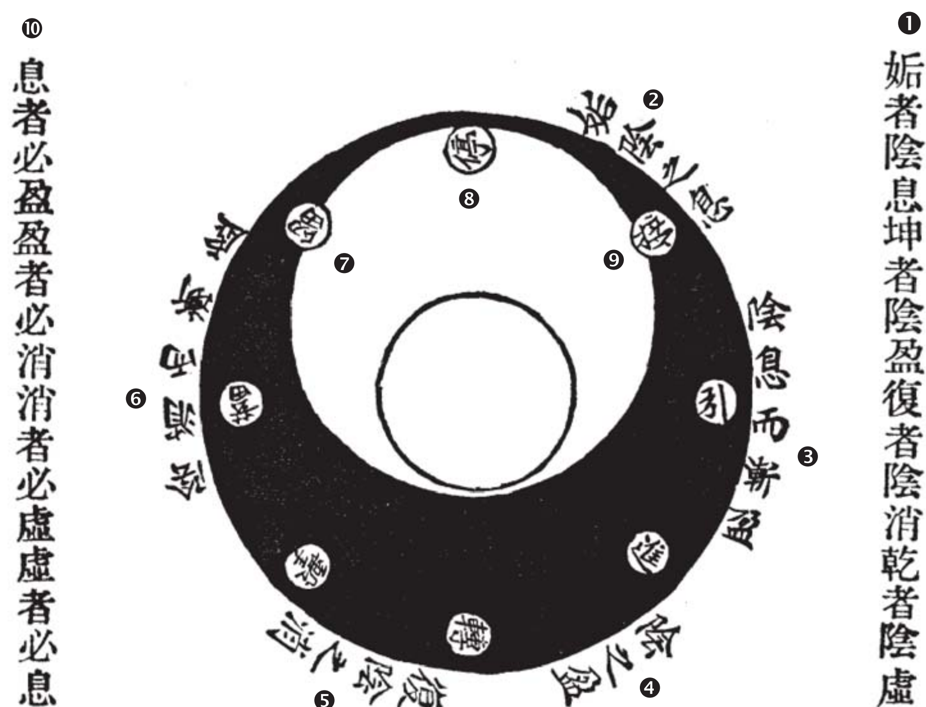


Fig. 0.27.2 Vertical diagram of yin according to the doctrine of growth and decline, fullness and emptiness

Inscription at right:

❶ at Gou (44) the *yin* lines start to increase; at Kun (2) they are in full; at Fu (24) the *yin* lines start to wane; at Qian (1) they are gone.

Inscriptions around the circle:

❷ *Jie* corresponds to southwest; *yin* of Gou (44) is still at rest, but has already woken up;

❸ *Yin* corresponds to west; *yin* starts to grow slowly;

❹ *Jin* corresponds to northwest; *yin* is in full;

❺ *Zhuan* corresponds to north; *yin* of Fu (24) starts to decline;

❻ *Ji* corresponds to northeast; *yin* declines and gradually enters into emptiness;

❼ *Xu* corresponds to east; *yin* is empty;

❽ Liu corresponds to southeast; *yin* is gone;

❾ *Ting* corresponds to south; *yin* is at rest.

Inscription at left:

❿ all that is on the increase must become full; all that is full must become empty; all that is going to die out must then disappear; all that is gone must then be re-born.

28 ✦ Illustrated explanations of the Three Powers (San-cai)

Diagram of the Three Powers (San-cai)

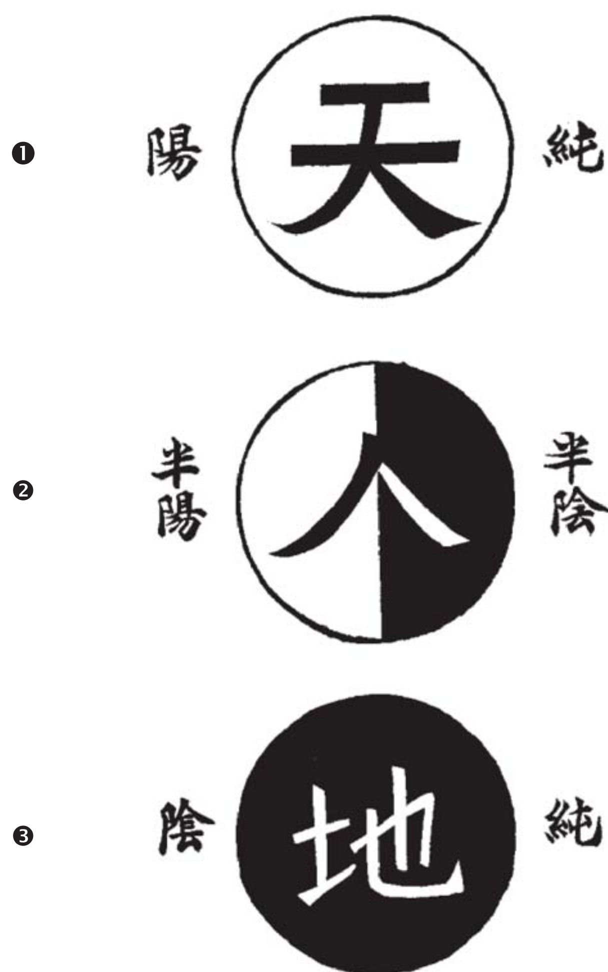


Fig. 0.28.1 Diagram of the Three Powers (San-cai)

Inscriptions:

❶ Heaven, the pure Yang;

❷ Man, the semi-Yang and semi-Yin;

❸ Earth, the pure Yin.

The Book of Changes states:

> *"In ancient times, the sages created an exhaustive list of regulations of what was right and essential for the complete development of every nature under the sky, until they arrived at the Book as the mandate for them appointed by heaven."*

The 'regulations' were means to distinguish things in accordance with inherent natural qualities and served to discriminate between good and bad. By 'nature', they mean the nature of men and things which were given to them by heaven. 'Orders appointed by heaven' means the heavenly way to arrange all things under heaven according to their nature. Hence, we say 'that which is the way of arrangement' constitutes what is called 'the course of things according to their natures' — this is not to be confused with the Way of heaven or Dao, the true mission of which is unknown even by sages.

So how can we obtain the knowledge of Dao? The Book of Changes was created in accordance with the principles of heaven and earth, and hence shows us the true course of things in heaven and earth and between them. Heaven and earth, through their pre-assigned positions, reflect the natures of all myriad things between them. Contemplating the course of all myriad things, the sages saw the Way reflected in them. Contemplating the course of things in heaven and on earth, the sages saw the Way reflected in heaven and on earth.

In its breadth and greatness, heaven manifests the way of heaven. In its breadth and greatness, earth shows the way of the universe, that is, the union of heaven and earth. In their breadth and greatness, all things co-existing between heaven and earth display the way of the myriad things in the world. In his breadth and greatness, man can realize the way of all things between heaven and earth. Therefore he who realizes the way of all things in the world can understand the way of the common people; he whose capabilities are expansive and limitless in the realization of the true state of heavenly things is named a celestial being; he whose capabilities are

expansive and limitless in understanding the way of the common people is called a sage.

Since heaven is able to discriminate between all myriad things, it is called expansive and limitless; since the sage can distinguish between a great many people, he is called a sage. Since the nature of numerous people is similar to the nature of all things in the world, the sages do not discriminate between them; therefore they follow Oneness (*dao*), which is in accord with the way of boundless heaven. Hence the way of a great many people follows Oneness in accordance with the way of all things under the sky. The people of the universe and all myriad things make Oneness.

To understand this principle means to obtain the capability of limitless heaven, when all myriad things and people are manifested through their natures, receiving their nourishment in full accordance with abundance of all the seasons. When the sages follow the Changes, Classics, poems and seasons according to circumstances, without being carried away by their currents, they rejoice in heaven's rules and orders and know its ordinations, to finally transform into celestial beings. If sages were not the most spiritual beings under the sky, how could they be found doing all these things? It is manifested in the benevolence of their actions which they conceal, and the storing up of their resources. The sages give the stimulus to all men in the world without having the same anxieties that common people possess. Complete are their abundant virtues and the greatness of their stores, the true mission of which is unknown by the common people!

The nature of man, being a creation of heaven and continually preserved, is the gate of all goodwill and righteousness. That which ensues as the result of their movement is goodness; that which shows it in its completeness is the nature of men and things. The benevolent see it and call it benevolence. The wise see it and call it wisdom. The common people act daily according to it, yet have no knowledge of it. Thus it is that the course of things as seen by the superior being is seen by few.

Therefore of all the things that furnish models and visible figures, there are none greater than heaven and earth; of all the things that change and extend an influence on others, there are none greater than the four seasons; of all the things suspended in the sky with their figures displayed clear and bright, there are none greater than the sun and moon; of the honored and exalted there are none greater than he who is rich and noble; and for preparing things for practical use, and the invention and making of instruments for the benefit of all under the sky, there are none greater than the sages.

In accordance with this, the sages contemplate the brilliant phenomena of the heavens and examine the definite arrangements of earth. Thus they know the cause of darkness on earth and of light in heaven, and the causes for the obscure and bright. They trace things from their beginning and follow them to the end. They perceive how the union of spiritual substance (*shen*) and vital breath (*qi*) form things, and the disappearance or wandering away of the soul produces the change of their constitution. They know the characteristics of things (*lei*), and the distinctions between men and beasts, gods and spirits. The advantage of these characteristics arises in both external and internal matters, and is called *shen* (spirit). Therefore those sages, fully understanding the way of heaven and having clearly ascertained the experience of the people, instituted the people's development by purifying their hearts with reverent caution, thereby giving more spirituality and intelligence to their virtues. The great attribute of heaven and earth is the giving and maintainance of life. What is most precious for the sage is to respond to the highest place of the superior man and ruler, so that he can be the human representative of limitless heaven and boundless earth.

29 • Illustrated explanations of heaven and earth's visual forms

The visual forms of heaven and earth

According to the sequence of the first cultural hero, Fu Xi, the visual forms of heaven and earth were symbolized as a high mountain placed at the northwest and a great collection of water (marsh) placed at the southeast. The intersection of these two opposite forms is represented in this diagram [Fig. 0.29.1] through the heavenly sign Xu (11) and the earthly sign Hai (12). This denotes that the two do no harm to each other. We also see in the diagram the mechanism of the restless flow of *qi*, also known as the vital substance of Nature. *Qi* can also be interpreted as post-birth energy.

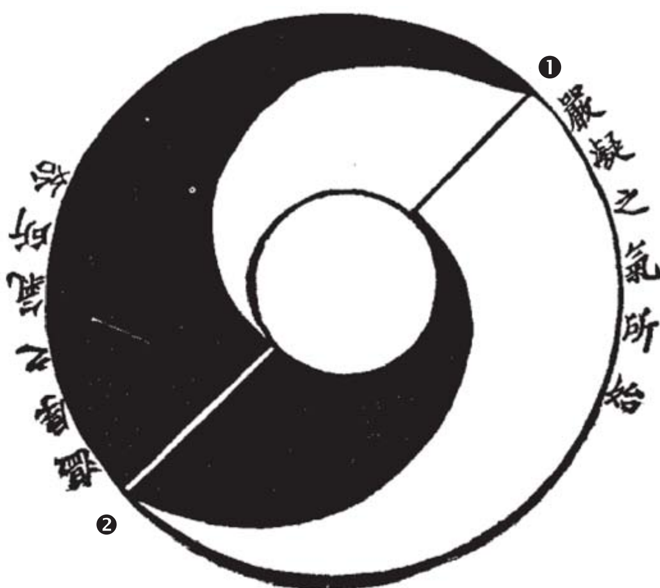


Fig. 0.29.1 The visual forms of heaven and earth

Inscriptions:

- ❶ start of the stern and frozen *qi*;
- ❷ the warm and gentle *qi* of spring.

Heaven receives its position from above, residing at the northwest, while earth sits beneath at the southeast. In terms of Feng Shui theory, there is the White Tiger at the right of the diagram, the mature emblematic part of the *Taiji* motif.

From a historical point of view, the oldest son of King Wen did not receive the reins of government for the kingdom of all under heaven, which were handed down instead to the King's children and grandchildren borne by his second wife, a concubine.

According to the concept of the superior being or a person with great abilities, the sage spends her lifetime at the northwest at the site of the beautiful mountain, whose lofty peak pierces the sky.

From a commercial point of view, we can find money and wealth at the southeast, where a collection of water or sea sits in the vast expanses.

In the concept of the Central Spring, Mount Taishan represents the central place of the whole universe where heaven unites with earth. It is regarded as the pivot around which all things turn, standing so independent and high, the dwelling place of sages since antiquity.

Once upon a time, it was said that Confucius (551-479 BC) headed towards Mount Taishan. When he saw the lofty peak of the imposing mountain, he asked a passer-by, "What wonderful mountain is over there?" to which he received the reply, "This peak is the official residence of kings." The next day, Confucius went to pay a visit to the temple of the Meng clan. So it was that from that time on, the clan of Mencius flourished for generations at that mountain.

From a climatic point of view, the harsh icy seasons of the earth starts at the southwest and culminates at the northeast, while the warm gentle seasons begin at the northeast and culminates at the southwest. The harsh icy seasons correlate with the cold, so this is the period when many sages are born. The warm gentle season corresponds to heat, that is why there are so many rich folk who are born during this phase.

In terms of human temper, people from the northwest generally tend towards material things and have strong character. Therefore their hearts can be broken into pieces. There are many sages among these people. Those who correlate with the southeast are typically beautiful, handsome, gentle and delicate. Therefore their hearts cannot be easily broken into pieces. There are not so many sages among these people.

All the businesses done by people correlate with conditions of heaven and earth, whether in warm or cold climate. In winter, cold is in the extreme; in spring all things start to grow and flourish; in summer heat culminates; in autumn, gusty winds and cold rain occur for long periods. If the skies are clear and cloudless for a long period, there should be a correspondingly long period of overcast skies too. This is the reason there are authorities and offenders, people who enjoy longevity and others who have an untimely death. Those who know this can survive the changes of destiny, never blaming heaven nor others.

In terms of *Taiji* boxing (to be discussed in later chapters), this means that in order to strike properly you must first take an advantageous position and have a stable posture. On no account does a 'stable posture' mean that your position should be higher than your opponent's, or that you should place yourself above him. Instead, during hand-to-hand combat your arm must first move upward. 'To move upward' means you take a higher position relative to your opponent. Victory or defeat is determined by this simple rule and by your level of *gong-fu*, whose core should consist of *qi* cultivation, the intrinsic energy one can generate and regenerate for successful application in any time and position.

30 • Illustrated explanations of the primeval state of universal qi around the year

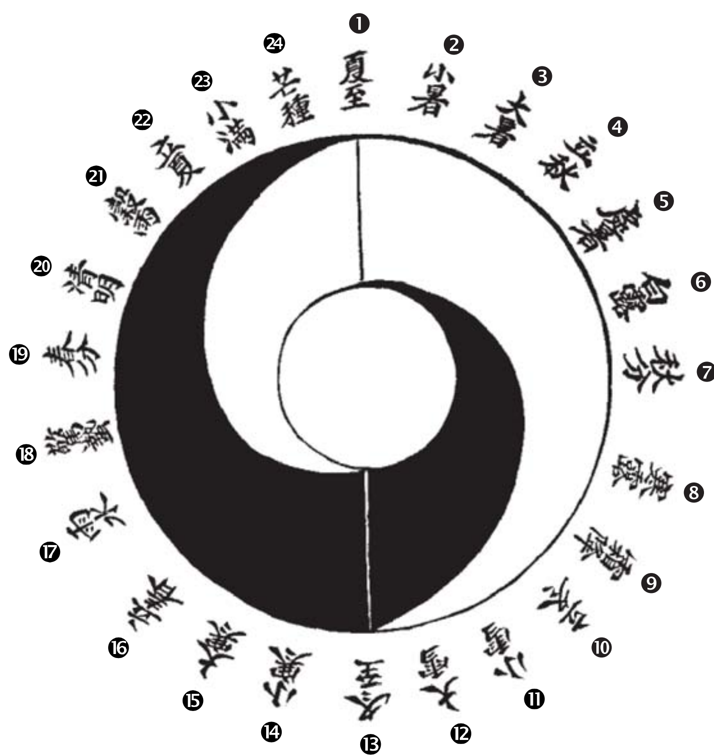


Fig. 0.30.1 Diagram of the twenty-four qi or solar periods

Inscriptions:

❶ Summer solstice (*Xia-zhi*);
❷ Little heat (*Xiao-shu*);
❸ Great heat (*Da-shu*);
❹ Autumn commences (*Li-qiu*);
❺ Heat finishes (*Chu-shu*);
❻ White dew (*Bai-lu*);
❼ Autumn equinox (*Qiu-fen*);
❽ Cold dew (*Han-lu*);
❾ Frost descends (*Shuang-jiang*);
❿ Winter commences (*Li-dong*);
⓫ Little snow (*Xiao-xue*);
⓬ Great snow (*Da-xue*);
⓭ Winter solstice (*Dong-zhi*);
⓮ Little cold (*Xiao-han*);
⓯ Great cold (*Da-han*);
⓰ Spring commences (*Li-chun*);
⓱ Rain water (*Yu-shui*);
⓲ Insects waken (*Jing-zhe*);

⓳ Spring equinox (*Chun-fen*);
⓴ Clear and bright (*Qing-ming*);
㉑ Corn rain (*Gu-yu*);
㉒ Summer commences (*Li-xia*);
㉓ Corn sprouting (*Xiao-man*);
㉔ Bearded grain (*Mang-zhong*).

Since antiquity, people have learned to synchronise their working rhythm with the conditions of universal *qi* movement through the year. It is accepted that spring is the time when *qi* begins to grow, summer the period of growing, autumn the time for harvest, and winter for storing. This cycle is also called 'the primeval state of *qi*' or 'the Universal Chaos,' within whose core we see a smaller circle of chaos symbolizing vital *qi* or the intrinsic energy circulating in the human body. This circle is flat and round in form, like a plate.

In great antiquity, before the reigns of Emperors Yao and Shun (22nd century BC), the human life-span generally lasted no more than forty years. Since the reigns of Yao and Shun, life-spans increased dramatically, sometimes reaching up to a hundred years, as people started to structure their lives in accordance with the annual cycles and conditions of universal *qi*.

In terms of the concept of growth-and-decline, each big circle of decline contains a small point of growth and each big circle of growth contains a small point of decline. Therefore we talk about the big and small circles, which represent both aspects of universal chaos. Why is the big circle of decline containing a small point of growth referred to as the births of sages? Since the deaths of Emperors Yao and Shun, the big circle of decline reigned in the world until the Zhou Dynasty (11th century BC). At the end of this period Confucius (551-479 BC) was born, hence becoming the emblematic embodiment of the small point of growth. It is said that from that time on, human perspectives regarding everyday concepts such as salary, rank, fame and longevity were conceived, and these began to exert significant changes to people's lives. In fact, the great ability of Master Shao-Zi to manage worldly issues can be simply explained by his skill in using universal *Qi* as it evolves all round the year.

31 • Illustrated explanations of the primeval state of the universal qi during the month

The primeval state of the universal qi during the month



Fig. 0.31.1 Diagram of the monthly wheel

Inscriptions:

❶ wane;

❷ wax;

❸ 1st day to 30th day.

The end of the moon's waning occurs on the 30th day and a half night.

The end of the moon's waxing occurs on the 15th day and a half night.

The moon begins to wax on the first day, becoming full on the 15th day.

During the 16th day the moon starts to decline, vanishing on the 30th day.

The moon wanes on the the first and 29th day of the month, with the first day containing the beginning of growth and the 29th marking the completion of decline.

The moon is full on the 14th and 16th days of the month, with the 14th day marking the end of its growth and the 16th marking the beginning of its decline.

The *yin* and *yang qi* of heaven and earth manifests in various forms, such as the inhalations and exhalations of the human body and the atmospheric conditions which transform the four seasons. The seasonal changes are marked by a distinct transformative cycle: at the height of the harsh winter months, a seed of warmth starts to germinate in the innermost heart of the cold. This warmth gradually grows and reaches its peak in the fourth lunar month. While still at the apex of heat during the hottest fifth month, a seed of cold begins to germinate, coming to fullness on the tenth month. So it is said, "The waxing of one invariably entails the waning of the other. Waxing and waning, fullness and emptiness, these are bound together through growth and decline." Hence *yin* and *yang qi* can be seen as a ceaseless cycle of transformation between stillness and motion, known variously as *yin-yang*, growth and decline, waxing and waning, fullness and emptiness, completeness and incompleteness and so on.

According to Master Zhu-Zi[20], "*Yang* actually never acts abruptly." He also declared that *yang* divides itself into thirty associated pairs. Master Feng Rao also states that, "*Kun* (earth) means the 'subordinate assistance.' The two figures Bo (23) and Fu (24) represent themselves as a pair of the mari-

[20] Also known as Zhu Xi who lived in 12th century BC.

tal intercourse. It has become common to say that all odds and ends, bits and pieces, are caused by the discontinuation of *yin* and *yang qi* circulation." Even now, we still do not fully appreciate that the fullness of *yin* and *yang*, as represented by Bo (23) and Fu (24), can be compared to the waxing and waning that occurs when constant changes continue uninterrupted.

Among the great achievements of the Duke of Zhou[21] was the cultivation of *qi* energy through long fasts. By practicing breathing exercises he accumulated great concentrations of internal energy, from which he cultivated an inexhaustible source of benevolence.

Though according to the motif of *yin* and *yang*, heaven and earth do not go through the cycles of waxing and waning, growth and decline, fullness and emptiness, yet Confucius emphasized the importance of these principles. In fact, proper practice of *Taijiquan* requires adherence to these principles in all respects. When *yang* or active *qi* energy is still at its initial phase of creation, it should travel the distance between Kun (2) and Fu (24). This means that despite its infancy, the presence of newborn *yang* effectively marks the end of Kun's (2) culmination.

Emerging from Fu (24) as the bottom undivided line, *yang* gradually transforms into Qian (1) to exercise complete influence over activities. However, the bottom weak line of figure Gou (44) ensures that this does not last long, thereby marking the beginning of *yang* decline. Hence *yang* begins to decline at Gou (44), leading to the fullness of *yin* at Kun (2).

The beginning of Qian's decline is caused by the nascent presence of *yin*, which grows to fullness at Kun (2). Like breathing, this cycle is repeated ad infinitum, inhaling and exhaling, opening and closing. Indeed, human life begins symbolically from the initial inhalation, marking the beginning of growth. However, since the amount of *qi* at birth is still too small, the cycle of growth and decline is not manifested in complete measure at this stage. Thus fullness is full and emptiness remains empty in the initial phase.

[21] Zhou-gong, the son of King Wen.

32 • Illustrated explanations of the primeval state of the universal qi around the day

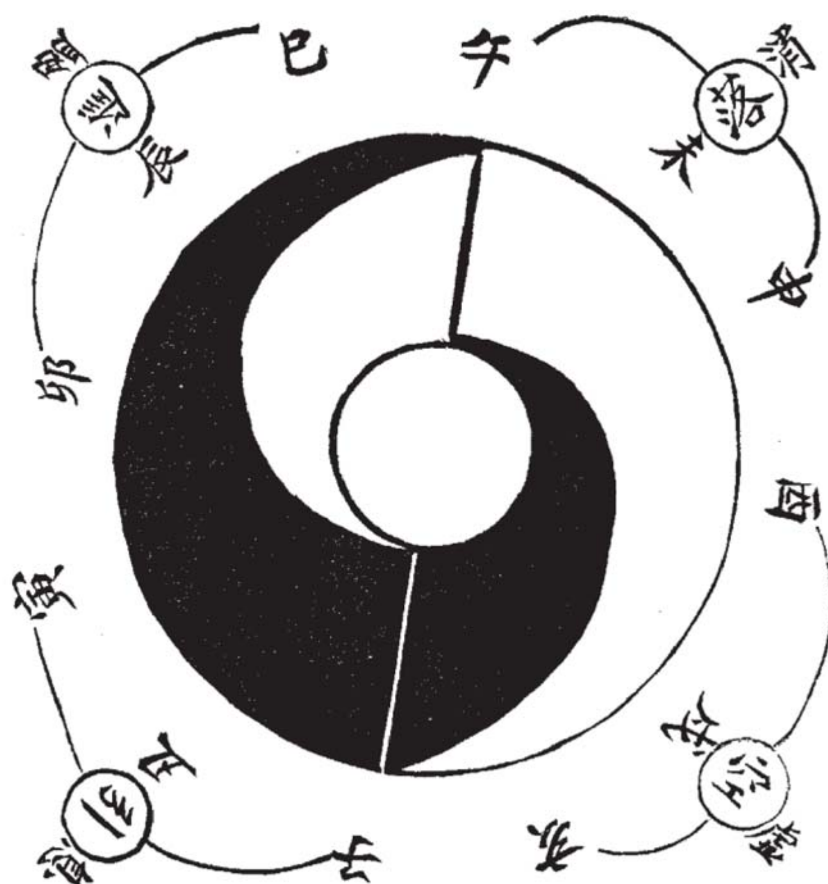


Fig. 0.32.1 The state of qi around the day

Taijiquan can be compared to the state of universal *qi* manifested throughout a day. From ancient times people marked the day's beginning and end in accordance with the conditions of *qi*. They noticed the dualistic relationship of day alternating with night, sunrise with sunset, dawn with twilight, darkness with light and so on, and as such, tied their notions of heaven with the brightness of day, and earth with the darkness of night. Similarly, the act of marriage was considered a union of day and night. Heaven was

seen to be of a superior level, expansive like the ocean: its mission was to mandate the sages to rule all under heaven richly and nobly, using the power of spiritual cultivation, fame and wealth amidst the mundanity of the earthly world. During the 'heavenly' time of day, men's calamities were few, but at night, calamities abounded. As day and night rotated, so too good fortune and calamity were seen to alternate naturally.

The three double-hours or watches from Zi (1) to Chou (2) and Yin (3)[22], may be correlated with the technique of *yin* or attraction associated with initial growth. The time interval from Mao (4) to Chen (5) and Si (6)[23] may be correlated with the technique of Jin or advance, associated with the fullness that comes from growth culminating at noon. The interval from Wu (7) to Wei (8) and Shen (9)[24] corresponds to parrying an opponent's attack. As long as the opponent's *qi* has reached fullness, her punch may be parried and the direction of her aggression changed. Simultaneously, I could also launch a counter-punch. As long as I block the target of her strike and redirect the momentum of her energy, the path of her descending *qi* and diminishing strength cannot go any other way but downward towards her feet. Therefore this technique is called Luo or Dropping. It correlates with the time interval from You (10), Xu (11) to Hai (12)[25], and is also known as letting the emptiness of the opponent vanish into Emptiness. Thus the *Kong*[26] or avoiding technique is widely acknowledged to be unbeatable.

Hence the four abovementioned techniques of *Taijiquan* — *Yin, Jin, Luo* and Kong — correspond to the four periods in the course of a day known as Fullness (*you*), Emptiness (*xu*), Decline (*xiao*) and Growth (*zhang*).

[22] 11pm to 5am.
[23] 5am to 11am.
[24] 11am to 5pm.
[25] 5 pm to 11pm.
[26] Kong stems from the Chinese character for 'void'.

33 • Illustrated explanations of the core of changes and development of the Taiji sequence according to Fu Xi



Fig. 0.33.1 Diagram of the core of changes and development of the Taiji sequence according to Fu Xi

Inscriptions:

❶ *Qian*: pure white and the pure *yang*;
❷ *Xun:* a lot of white, very little black; two strong lines with a weak line below;
❸ *Kan: yin* surpasses *yang* hidden between two weak lines, just as white is enclosed inside black;
❹ *Gen:* very little white, a lot of black; one strong line and two weak lines below;
❺ *Kun:* pure black and pure yin;
❻ *Zhen:* a lot of black and very little white; two weak lines with one strong line below;
❼ *Li: yang* surpasses *yin* hidden inside, just as black is enclosed within white;
❽ *Dui:* very little black, a lot of white; one weak line and two strong lines below.

South correlates with pure *yang,* hence it is depicted as *Qian*. North correlates with pure *yin,* hence it is depicted as *Kun*. *Li* corresponds with east and represents *yin* inside *yang*. *Kan* corresponds with west and represents *yang* inside *yin*. In the northeast one strong line creates two weak lines below, symbolising *Zhen*. In the southwest one weak line creates two strong lines below, symbolizing *Xun*. In the southeast we see the growing *yang* and declining *yin* of the *Dui* trigram. In the northwest we see the flourishing *yin* and the withering *yang* of *Gen*.

Fig. 0.33.1 depicts the *Taiji* motif created by the legendary forebear of Chinese civilization and the first cultural hero, Fu Xi. In fact, this motif was not known to the world until Master Xi Yi revealed it. Even the sages of Zhou did not understand Fu Xi's *Taiji* motif, and created their own sequence of the eight figures according to post-birth structures.

Contemplating the way the *Taiji* motif is depicted above and reading the inscriptions to each surrounding figure, we see first of all that *Taiji* divides all its *qi* energy into two spiral forms (*Liang-yi*) to produce the Four Symbols (*Si-xiang*) as well as the doctrine of the Five Phases (*Wu-xing*). This is done

in accord with the pre-birth sequence of the Eight Trigrams (*Ba-gua*), the source of all myriad things emerging from this circular arrangement.

Whilst creating the root of all writings, the ancestors created the *Taiji* diagram to describe the nature of the universe through symbolic forms. From the very beginning however, they noticed that the rulers of Zhou[27] created the legend of Fu Xi and credited this legendary figure as the progenitor of the *Taiji* motif, in lieu of investing time and effort investigating natural laws. This is why the diagram has become known under the name of Fu Xi and not Xi Yi.

The *Taiji* diagram consists of the outer circle and the inner sphere divided into black and white spiral halves. These halves are separated by an *s*-shaped line symbolising *yin* and *yang* substances interacting with each other. There is a white point located in the black portion and a black point in the white portion, representing the principle that within *yin* there is *yang* and within *yang* there is *yin*.

The idea of mutual influence and interaction of both elements as the source all vital activities in this world is symbolized by the commencement of the outer circle on the left of the diagram, that is, from *Zhen* at the northeast. The bottom strong line grows, going through the *Li* and *Dui* trigrams, until *Qian* is formed. Conversely, the bottom weak line of *Xun* grows as it travels clockwise down the right half of the circle, transforming into *Kan* and *Gen* until it turns into the *Kun* trigram. There are four cardinal directions known as the Four Corners, according to which *yin* and *yang* substances manifest themselves in different measures and in different positions within the ingenious arrangements of the Eight Trigrams. So, how can an ignorant person penetrate the fathomless knowledge hidden in the depths of the *Taiji* motif? The *Taiji* arrangement according to Fu Xi is not simply a motif that describes the existence of all things, but a model which explains the main principles underpinning mankind's survival. A diligent scholar will find the *yin-yang* dynamic hidden deep within the motif, a con-

[27] 11th to 8th century BC.

stantly changing relationship which forms the core of the original nature of changes according to the pre-birth function.

Observing the *Taiji* sequence of the Zhou sages, we can see that the motif is used to represent external activities generated from the core of *Taiji* known as the post-birth sequence of changes. Thus the pre-birth function includes the post-birth conditions. One approach to interpreting the function of pre-birth heaven is to use post-birth qualities to penetrate into the chaotic arrangement of the wonderful pre-birth essence. Otherwise, we have no other way to visually depict the unfathomable *Taiji* or Supreme Extremes.

To realize the Way (*dao*), we need to start with ourselves and go through the post-birth passage to understand the application of *Taiji*. However, any attempt to discuss the underlying mystery of the fathomless diagrams of Fu Xi and King Wen will yield little fruit. A better way recommended by the Zhou sages is to contemplate meditatively the mechanism of changes manifested in the alternation of day and night, of blowing breezes, of the subtle colour changes of the grass and so on. The person who spends twenty or more years in silent meditation will begin to understand manifestation of *Taiji* in natural phenomena occuring before his very eyes. Wasn't it Confucius who said that manifestation of the entire *Taiji* transformation could happen in the twinkling of an eye? Therefore serious contemplation in the self-development process needs to be accompanied by a thorough investigation of the principles of Nature.

The forms of heaven and earth are depicted above and below respectively. Implements of *Dao* which can be defined are not the *Dao*. *Dao* is *Dao* and implements are just implements. However, implements can be understood and used as a manifestation of the *Dao*. In this case, the implements of *Dao* are chaotic and equal to the Void. All endeavors to attain both sides of the coin simultaneously are ineffective. This is what the diagram is about. Assume the diagram is depicting a fall into the Void. In this case, the Two Forms, Four Symbols, Eight Trigrams and all myriad images would vanish into the darkness, the whole material world would sink into stagnation and come to a complete standstill, and all visualized figures would not correlate with the myriad things. So, what form would there be left to grasp? Hence the saying goes, "The course of heaven is one and indivisible." As heaven has no sound or odor, so what need has it for a place to conceal itself? Where would all the created forms and images be displayed?

Going through the four seasons, a myriad things are born due to the harmony of spiritual substances, without which no changes nor transformations could occur. All myriad forms are the visual manifestations of Oneness and vice versa. That is the meaning of this diagram. With silent contemplation, one can attain the invaluable realization that the *Taiji* motif is the origin of all wonderful things and conditions in the world. The mechanism of creation and transformation between heaven and earth is under the dominion of the great sages, celestial beings and gods. However, instead of exercising full control over this, they make the system of the Three Powers (*San-cai*) equally available to all men and things in the world, to discern those who grasp it well and those who follow it devotedly. In antiquity this formed the core of all scholarship, training, self-cultivation and development. Therefore how is it possible to ignore the significance of the *Taiji* diagram?

Dao is absolute good. Therefore all good things come out from this inexhaustible goodness, the fountainhead of Nature. Those things which emanate from this source are beyond the control of the destiny and dictates of the heavens. They emit chaotic sounds and strange odors; their appearance is crude and unworkable. Like an uncarved woodblock, they resemble a newborn babe, always beyond studying and cultivated knowledge. Only thus can they be really good and return to the absolutely no-mind and spontaneous state of the true sage. True benevolence and righteousness can be attained only through a return to this state, when 'the great carpenter does not cut,' when he proceeds without using any strength or force. Everything goes as it should and he practices 'letting go.' Words are inadequate to explain this. Truly, the language of *Dao* is the language of all myriad things created within it.

The *Taiji* motif represents a dish upon which heaven and earth get combined in the past and present. In the twinkling of an eye, a tiny speck of dust can contain the entire world, here and now. How can this be understood by the intellect? The creative nature of heaven and earth, with their processes of growth and decline, fullness and emptiness, do not cling to any definite forms and there are no extremes that they cannot attain. This is what the diagram is all about. What is not shown in the diagram just follows it, and the diagram creates the forms and contents of the entire mechanism of reproduction.

If a man, through arrogance and ego attempts to dissect the elements which make up *Taiji*, separating what is heaven from what is earth, he would fall completely confused into darkness. Such is the infinite significance of the *Taiji* motif, which having retained its meaning for so long, untouched by time and flawed scholarship, is known as the Ancient *Taiji* Diagram.

The Chapter 'Shuo-gua chuan' or 'Treatise on Remarks on the Trigrams' in the Great Appendix of the Book of Changes describes the positions of the

figures in the diagram. It states, "The symbols of heaven and earth received their determinate positions above and below." The Chapter expounds the *Taiji* diagram in terms of the colours black and white, *yin* and *yang*, the Two Forms, motion and stillness, and heaven's loftiness and honor as opposed to earth's lowness and humbleness.

The strong and weak symbols derive their status on top or below in accordance with the principles of the diagram. Things are displayed in a similar fashion, no matter how high or low they are.

The upper and lower trigrams,the relative position of individual lines (indicating their relative importance), and the black and white all have their places assigned accordingly through the numerous manifestations of the *yin-yang* cycle of decline and growth: *Lao-Yang*, *Lao-Yin*, *Shao-Yang*, *Shao-Yin*. In the scheme of the diagram there are four symbolic figures which inform humans of the warm and cold seasons, past and future events, characteristics of weak or strong, male or female natures and so on.

According to the sequence of Fu Xi, the symbols of heaven and earth receive their positions above and below; those for water and fire are positioned across at east and west and do each other no harm; those for thunder and wind stimulate each other; those for mountain and marsh exchange influences. Among these eight symbols there is a mutual interaction correlating with the growth and decline of the *yin* and *yang* substances along the Four Cardinal directions and the Four Corners, which form the basis of the Eight Trigrams, and thus create the sixty-four figures which embrace all myriad things and conditions.

The attributes of the diagram consists of the Supreme Extremes (*Taiji*), Two Forms (*Liang-yi*), Four Symbols (*Si-xiang*), Eight Trigrams (*Ba-gua*), good and ill luck (*Ji-xiong*). Though limited by the framework of the diagram, the *Taiji* motif contains within it all myriad things and conditions. In fact, the *yin-yang* interaction portrays an endless cycle, the mechanism of reproduction and multiplication under heaven. *Taiji* is not simply an embodiment of *yin-yang* chaotically mixing, but the original source from

which Two Forms are issued forth. The Two Forms are followed by the Four Symbols, which then creates the opportunity for the Eight Trigrams to emerge. However, *Taiji* remains the source of all things at every stage of multiplication.

In antiquity, the wise used to regard *yin* and *yang* as the sum total of heaven and earth. However, since corporeal substances were first engendered from the formless, we say that there is the Great Principle of Changes, a Grand Origin, a Great Beginning, and a Great Primordial Simplicity. At the point of Great Changes, corporeal substances were not yet manifest. They start to emerge from the Grand Origin, and at the point of the Great Beginning, the embryo of all material manifestations was formed. From the Great Simplicity the essential qualities were derived. When the formlessness and primitive qualities of the primal substance were still indistinguishable and blended together, it was called chaos, meaning that all things are chaotically mixed and not yet separated from one another. The purer and lighter elements tended upwards and became the heavens; the larger and heavier elements tended downwards and formed the earth. Harmoniously proportioned substances became humans. Thus heaven and earth, containing spiritual elements, worked to procreate and evolve all things by rotating them through the vital natural cycles.

As Confucius emphasized, there was nothing prior to the sequence of the *Taiji* diagram nor was there the pre-birth function of heaven in the sequence according to Fu Xi. As for King Wen, the creator of the post-birth arrangement of the Eight Trigrams, he formulated the diagram, inspected the symbols contained in it and appended it with explanations. In this way, good fortune and calamity were revealed. *Qian* and *Kun* or *yin* and *yang* or heaven and earth, having been established in their rightful places, constituted the system of changes. If *Qian* and *Kun* were taken away, there would be no means of discerning that system; and if that system were not discerned, *Qian* and *Kun* would almost cease to act. *Qian*, symbol of heaven, conveys the idea of strength and reveals to humans the pure simplicity of its rule and natural action. *Kun*, symbol of earth, conveys the idea of docil-

ity and reveals to humans the simplicity of its receptivity and processes. Thus owing to their facility and simplicity, there is balance and constancy in all things. The separate lines are representations of this; so too are the symbols pictorial representations of this. The movement of the lines and symbols are unseeable whilst good and ill fortune are seen openly and externally. The work to be done appears by the changes; the compassion of the sages is revealed in their explanations of the lines.

Confucius clearly explained, "In antiquity the sages created the Book by observing the images in heaven, laying out the hexagrams, and appending texts to them in order to elucidate good and bad fortune." This is abundantly clear. The strong and the weak lines displace each other and produce the changes and transformations in the figures. Therefore it is said that the good fortune and calamity mentioned in the explanations are indications of right and wrong in the conduct of human affairs, carried out in silence and trusting in spirit.

The Ancient *Taiji* Diagram represents all aspects of the mystery of the cosmos through the microcosm of the human body. In heaven and on earth there are no giants nor dwarfs, neither past nor present, inhalation nor exhalation, permanence nor impermanence , distance nor closeness. In fact, neither forms nor symbols exist, only soundless and odorless nature that cannot be grasped even by the sages. Therefore they created the strokes and lines of *yin-yang*, weak and strong, close and open, wide and narrow, characteristics of the Two Forms, the Four Symbols, the Eight Trigrams, so that good fortune and calamity could be defined. The *yin-yang* method engenders the changes between *yin* and *yang* substances, and the weak and strong lines, which eventually combine to activate the spirit (*shen*).

For these reasons, the sages looked to the diagram to express a perfect vision of sagehood and the cosmos. Despite the frustrations occasioned by the incredible diversity of the diagram, they worked hard to find underlying principles in the sequence and to unveil the internal structure of the figures. In seeking structure in the diagram, they found structure; and where there was none to find, they invented structure to satisfy their need

for coherence. What heaven and earth value is called good fortune; what the spirits and gods bless is called good fortune; what the Way of Man delights in is called good fortune. Whatever is despised and abhorred is called calamity. Therefore when there is too much vice in the period of good fortune, calamities arise correspondingly. How could the sages have realized this only through contemplation and deliberation?

The natural existence of particular apportionment found shape in the models and images seen on the He River Map (*He-tu*)[28] and the Luo River Writings (*Luo-shu*)[29]. The sages derived the diagram from the natural world by a process that may be considered a mythic paradigm for the investigation of things. The significance of the natural pattern also extended to other charts and diagrams associated with the *Taiji* diagram, the He River Map and the Luo River Writings. These were said to have been revealed in deep antiquity to Fu Xi. The He River produced forth the map, and from the Luo River emanated the writings. The sages took them as patterns or models. Legend has it that the He River Map emerged from the Yellow River on a dragon-horse when Fu Xi ruled the world. He accordingly took its design as a model in drawing the Eight Trigrams. The Luo-shu was the design displayed on the back of a spirit-tortoise at the time when another legendary cultural hero, Yu, controlled the flood. The design contained the numbers one to nine, which Yu used to set up the Nine Regions under heaven.

The sixty-four hexagrams of the Book start with *Qian* (heaven), whose bottom line represents the Nine Dragons hidden in its core, symbolizing the pure embodiment of *yang* substance. Though the sixty-four hexagrams do not occur in a regular order, they can be grouped by pairs. In most cases, each figure can be paired with another, which appears to be the first turned upside down. In the case of eight symmetrical hexagrams that cannot be changed by inversion, pairs are created by changing divided (*yin*) lines to undivided (*yang*) lines. In the Great Appendix to the Book of Changes the

[28] See Chapter 4.
[29] See Chapter 5.

sequence of the lines with their various *yin* and *yang* associations came to be regarded as the keys to understanding the esoteric meaning of the Changes.

In heaven and earth, good fortune comes from conforming to prevailing trends and calamity results from going against them. In the mountains and riverways, good fortune holds the low position while calamity holds the high. In the Way of Man, good fortune is seen as upright and calamity as perverse. This is why it is said that *Qian* symbolizes heaven which directs the great beginnings of things with ease, and *Kun* symbolizes earth, which brings them to completion in unhesitating response. It is by the ease with which *Qian* proceeds that it directs as it does, and by its unhesitating response that *Kun* exhibits such ability.

He who attains this ease of heaven will be easily understood, and he who attains freedom through the laborious effort of earth will be easily followed. With the attainment of such ease and freedom from laborious effort, mastery of all principles under the sky will be attained. When such mastery is achieved, the sages enjoy their positions in the middle between heaven and earth.

The symbols speak of the most complex phenomena under the sky, and yet there is nothing in them that provokes a negative reaction. The explanations of the lines speak of the subtlest movements under the sky, yet there is nothing in them to produce confusion. A learner of *Taijiquan* will consider what is said in the diagrams and reflect on them; she will deliberate on what is said in the explanations of the lines and then move. By such consideration and deliberations she will be able to make all the changes, which will then be undertaken successfully.

36 ✦ Illustrated explanations of the eight trigrams' growth and decline in the sequence according to Fu Xi

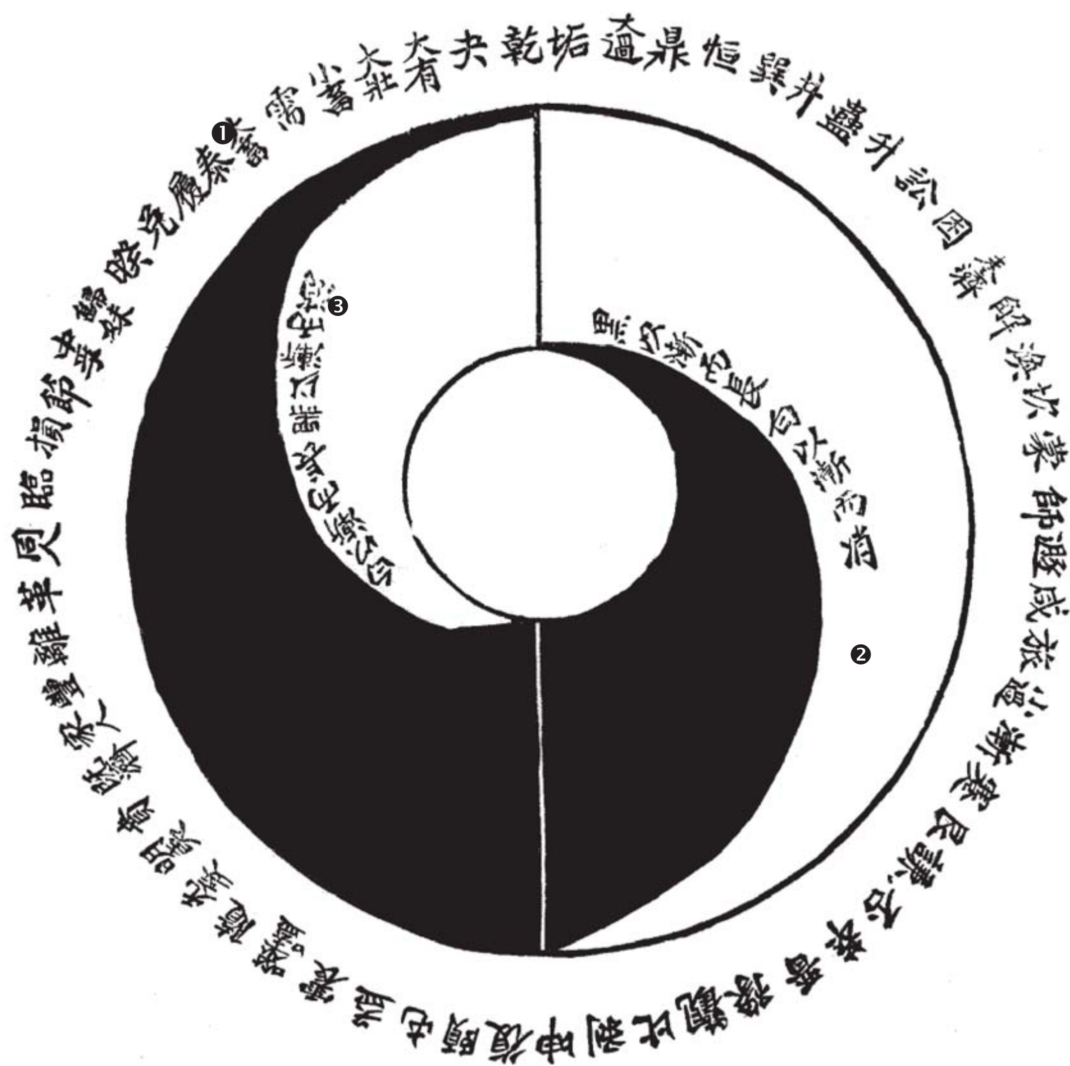


Fig. 0.36.1 Diagram of the eight trigrams' growth and decline in the sequence according to Fu Xi

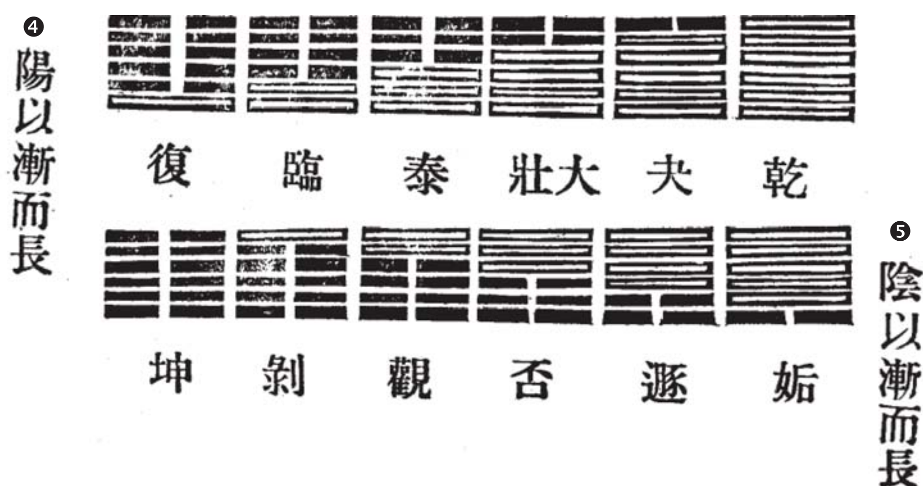


Fig. 0.36.2 Diagram of the eight trigrams' growth and decline in the sequence according to Fu Xi (cont'd)

Inscriptions around the circle:

- ❶ These are the names of the 64 hexagrams, starting with hexagram Qian at the top and going counter-clockwise in the sequence described in Fig. 0.12.2;
- ❷ black is gradually growing while white is gradually declining;
- ❸ white is gradually growing while black is gradually declining.

Inscriptions for hexagrams:

- ❹ (*left to right*) *Yang* is gradually growing: Fu (24), Lin (19), Tai (11), Da Zhuang (34), Guai (43), Qian (1);
- ❺ (*right to left*) *Yin* is gradually growing: Gou (44), Dun (33), Pi (12), Guan (20), Bo (23), Kun (2).

The path of white starts from Fu (24) with the bottom strong line increasing at Lin (19), Tai (11), Da Zhuang (34) and Guai (43), to become the pure *yang* figure at Qian (1).

The path of black starts from Gou (44) with the bottom weak line increasing at Dun (33), Pi (12), Guan (20) and Bo (23), to become the pure *yin* figure at Kun (2).

The Fu (24) hexagram is a son of heaven and earth, which in a few stages will become pure *yang* at Qian (1), symbol of strength. Once strength reaches its culmination, a daughter must be born, just like a drop of water in the middle of fire. The Gou (44) hexagram is a daughter of heaven and earth, which in a few stages will become pure *yin* at Kun (2), symbol of docility. Once the quality of docility reaches its culmination, a son must be born, like a piece of fire created in the middle of water. Therefore the way of *Qian* (heaven) is to rear a son, although this does not preclude a daughter being brought up. Similarly, the way of *Kun* (earth) is to rear a daughter, but this does not mean a son cannot be brought up.

When *Kun* (2) changes into the Fu (24) hexagram to become clearer in quality it gradually reaches the state of Guai (43). Therefore it is said that by using only one basket for carrying earth, a noble man can raise a mountain. Once Qian (1) degrades into the Gou (44) hexagram to become slightly dimmer in quality, it gradually reaches the state of Bo (23). Therefore it is said that just by using a single flame a mean person can set the field ablaze. Practitioners need only to reflect on the growth and decline of black and white in this diagram to understand how to progress and avoid the pitfalls of the path.

For those who desire to learn of their destinies through changes and transformations, mere contemplation of the present diagram is insufficient to realize the process of growth and decline. It is also necessary to regard the process from the perspectives of the Four Features in which the *qi* substance manifests in different measures, such as safety and danger, advance and retreat. To safeguard against evil spirits, these Four Features imply awareness of advance and retreat, life and death, existing as a result of the virtues emanating from the intercourse of heaven and earth, the brightness of the sun and moon, the sequence of all the Four Seasons, and the good fortune and calamity produced by the interaction of the gods and evil spirits. Therefore by cultivating virtues and concentrating her attention on the Way, a noble person takes her place above but never becomes arrogant; in her relations with those below, she never betrays the country. If she follows the Way, her speeches are sufficient to encourage the country; if there is no Way, her silence is enough to fill it up.

37 ✦ Illustrated explanations of Taiji performed in the black and white pattern



Fig. 0.37.1 Diagram of Taiji performed in the black and white pattern

White represents the *yang* form; black represents *yin* substance. Black and white forms interact as follows: when *yang* culminates it engenders *yin;* when *yin* culminates it gives birth to *yang*. The mechanism of their *qi* interaction is never at rest. Therefore *Taiji* comes forth with a circle in the center, which is the essential core of the entire *Taiji* motif.

Song of the Taiji diagram with a circle in the center

I have a ball, the black and white colors mixed together,
Though there are just two ingredients, the result is total Oneness.
Its greatness is beyond embracing, its smallness cannot be broken up;
There is neither beginning nor end, there is neither right nor left.
There are Eight Trigrams and Nine Fields criss-crossed down and across.

The present and past look forward; *Qian* (heaven) and *Kun* (earth)
Are at their determinate positions above and below.
Emperors Yao and Shun, the sages of Zhou and Confucius
Have established the court of law, within which I play —
My stringed instrument sounds sonorous and resonant.

As Confucius states, "*Taiji* consists of *yin* and *yang*
And determines the good fortune and calamity of prospective cases
Through the visual forms of the Five Phases (*Wu-xing*)
And the Spirit (*shen*) of the Five Constant Virtues (*Wu-chang*)."

Try to use compasses to produce full circles and rectangles to draw squares. As Mencius said,
"Dealing with this, never forget about its scale,
The name of which is Magnificently Refined Energy.
Becoming great and strong, it dominates over all in this world,
Making profound bows before the legendary Emperor Fu Xi."

In the present diagram, the integrity of the teachings of the Zhou sages have been retained for the most part. Still, some minor discrepancies remain. The diagram created by the Zhou sages dispenses with scale to allow a student of the Changes to realize in broad terms the main principle of the Zhou *Taiji* diagram. A circle in the center of the diagram embodies the

essential core of *Taiji*. The explanation to the diagram is quite sufficient without additional comments required.

The Way of the Changes lies in the aforementioned *yin-yang* arrangement. The Way of the world lies in governing troubled lands by remedial actions; prosperity and waste depend on the location of mountains and rivers; dukes and kings are judged by their sincerity or dishonesty; social customs are determined by the successive transmission. Teachings and the arts are designated by false and true cultivation, philosophies by light and darkness, classical works and literature by purity and honesty, scholars and officials by rank and post, nobility and meaness by advance and retreat, well-being and degradation by the strong and weak, the common people by the ability to work and rest, wealth and taxes by the full and empty, population by increase and decrease, productivity and calamity by good years, norms and laws by detailed and brief regulations, grasses and trees by the low and lofty, food and drink by their measure. Therefore nothing exists extraneous to the diagram.

As Master Cheng-Zi states:

> *"Arrangement of all myriad things between heaven and earth must be correlated with Nature; and there is not a thing which lies outside the diagram."*

The creation of the diagram indicates that in seven days *yang* or the subject of the strong bottom line of Fu (24) will return and repeat its proper course. Thus the diagram depicts an uninterrupted continuation of *yang* motion, which does not go too far but returns to its commencing position. These concepts stimulated and propagated thinking in the Confucian school of idealist philosophy.

38 • Illustrated explanations of Taiji according to the Yellow River Chart

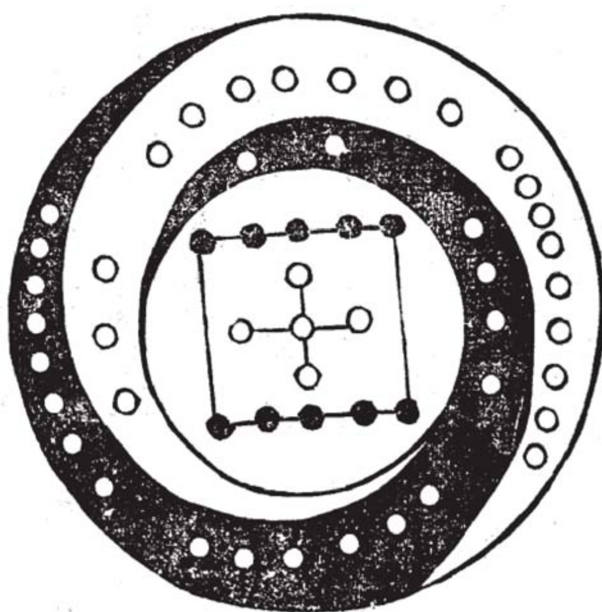


Fig. 0.38.1 Diagram of Taiji according to the Yellow River Chart

It is said, "One and six are located below; two and seven are placed above"; correspondingly, *yang* receives its place above and *yin* below. It is also said, "Three and eight are placed on the left, while four and nine on the right"; correspondingly, *yin* is situated on the left and *yang* on the right.

It is said, "Five engenders numbers; the interconnected five forms the other numbers"; this means that the numbers are born inside but formed outside. It is also said, "*Yin* and *yang* go from inside outward". This means that the odd numbers of *yang* (one, three, seven and nine) and the even numbers of *yin* (two, four, six and eight) gradually mature and sub-divide into smaller groups with defined positions, and are unified into the *Taiji* motif within the structure of the Yellow River Chart. *Yin* and *Yang*, rotating and replacing each other ceaselessly from left to right, pivot around the empty center of He-tu with numbers five and ten. Hence, *yin* and *yang* are said to gather together in the center at the source of heaven and earth called *Zhong-qi*, or concentrated in the center's intrinsic energy.

39 • Illustrated explanations of Taiji according to the Luo River Writings

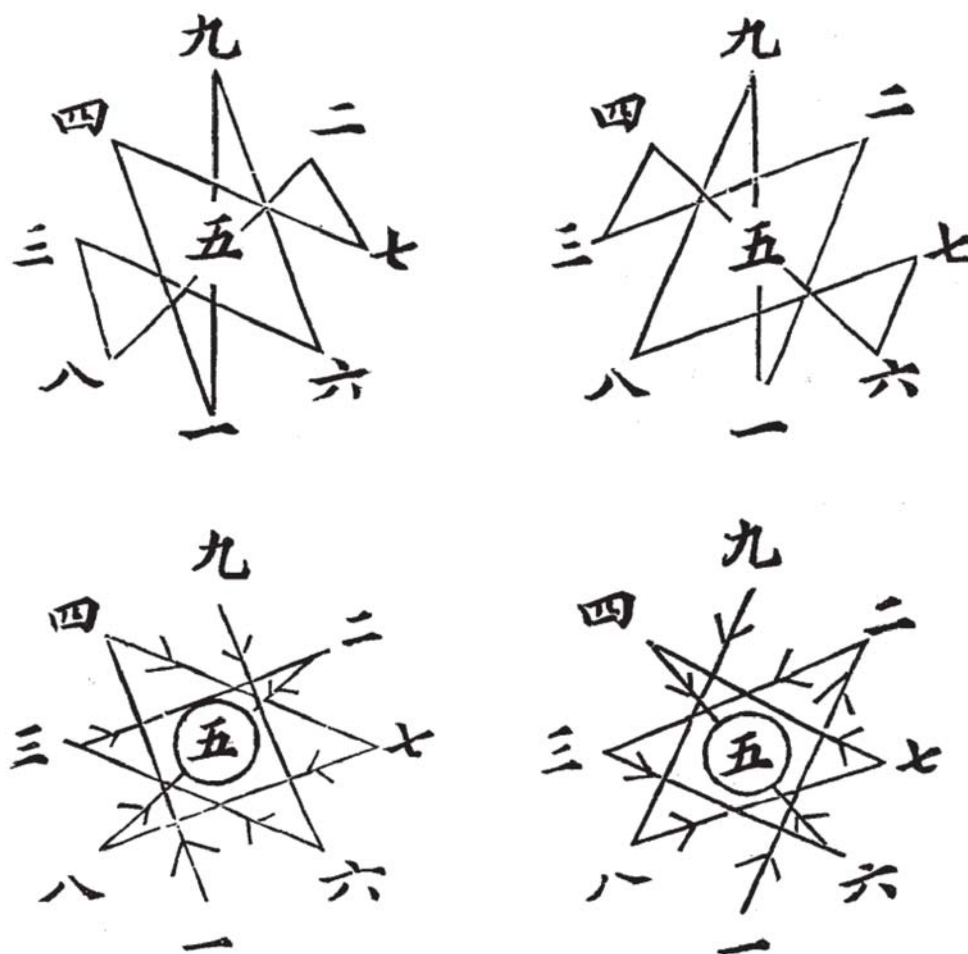


Fig. 0.39.1 Diagram of Taiji according to the Luo River Writings

The diagram in the upper right corner depicts the harmonious formation of numbers one to nine in three interconnected triangles, illustrating the direct motion of heavenly and earthly numbers.

The diagram in the left upper corner depicts the following sequence: one, four, seven, two, five, eight, three, six and nine, making three interconnect-

ed triangles in a diagonal direction to illustrate the reverse cyclic movement of the numbers.

A *Taiji* student trying to master the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration should practice the following exercise:

- Place both hands in a hold-ball position: the right hand below with palm up and the left hand above the right, palm down;
- At the starting position one (see lower right diagram), move the 'ball' up to two, then three and six. Meanwhile, the movement of the head leads both legs from position nine to eight, then seven to four and six, going through five in the center;
- While going through the center, exert a spurt of *qi* energy towards the Central Chamber and replace your right hand's position with the left one;
- Now with the left hand below, palm up, move from one (see lower left diagram) to four, then to seven and eight. At the same time, the movement of the head leads both legs from nine to six, then three, two and eight, going through five in the center;
- When going through the center, again exert a spurt of *qi* towards the Central Chamber and replace the left hand with the right. At that moment your arms and legs will form a triangle of one-two-three (when the right hand is placed below) or one-four-seven (when the left hand is below).

This exercise will aid the correct performance of postures which reflect the key principles of *Taijiquan* through movement: up-down motion (*qi-luo*), advance-retreat (*jin-tui*), turn around in free style (*xuan-zhuan*), light-heavy (*qing-zhong*), empty-full (*xu-shi*), strong-weak (*gang-ruo*) and closing-opening (*ji-fa*).

40 • Illustrated explanations of interaction between heaven and earth according to the Yellow River Chart

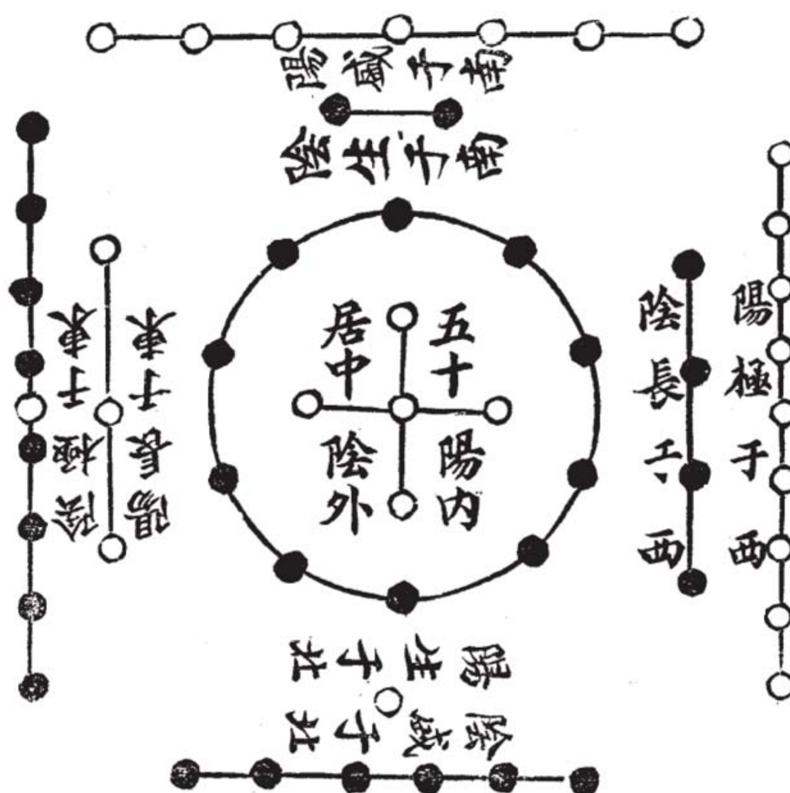


Fig. 0.40.1 Diagram of interaction between heaven and earth according to the Yellow River Chart

Interaction between heaven and earth is carried out in accordance with the Yellow River Chart while interaction between the sun and moon is performed in accordance with the Luo River Writings.

Interaction between heaven and earth is represented at Tai (11), where the Book of Changes indicates is consistently firm and faithful through *yang* or the odd number three.

Interaction between the sun and moon is represented at Ji-Ji (63), where the Book of Changes indicate a swathe of worthy individuals at *yin* or the

even number four. Since worthy individuals are mentioned here, the interaction must be highly reasonable. O, how profound it is! Just look at the center of the Yellow River Chart to notice the numbers five and ten which run throughout the whole pattern. Besides, thirty external pathways indicate that one encloses three circles. Therefore the entire circle is called the Chart, its round shape symbolizing heaven. Look at the center of the Luo River Writings to notice the number five and the forty external pathways, indicating that one encloses four squares. Hence the square is known as the 'Writings,' embodying the earth. The total of the numbers in the Chart is fifty-five, an odd but complete number[30]. Hence, it is the symbol of the sun.

[30] 55 is considered a complete number since 5 + 5 = 10.

41 ✦ Illustrated explanations of interaction between the sun and moon according to the Luo River Writings



Fig. 0.41.1 Diagram of the interaction between the sun and moon according to the Luo River Writings

Inscriptions:

❶ Yang {3} grows directly east;
❷ Yin {4} grows at southeast;
❸ Yang {9} culminates directly south;
❹ Yin {2} is born at the southwest;
❺ Yang {7} disappears directly west;
❻ Yin {6} disappears at northwest;
❼ Yang {1} is born directly north;
❽ Yin {8} culminates at north-east;
❾ Five places in the middle of ten.

The number that denotes the Writings is the earthly number forty-five which represents the moon. The potential spirit represented in the Chart and Writings can be mastered without harm to the body. The interaction between heaven and earth and between the sun and moon is a matter of fate (*ming*), princples (*li*), individual natures (*xing*), the mechanisms of Gou (44) and Fu (24) combined together. As a result, one can clean the mind (*xin*) and retreat into the depths of the mysterious interaction between heaven and earth, where one *yang* contains six *yin* in the middle of the intercourse between the sun and moon, and one firm and completely pure *yang*. Hence the united virtues of heaven and earth as well as the unified brightness of the sun and moon go through creation and destruction, engendering and annihilating the wonderful manifestations of spirit (*shen*), which manifests itself not in the Chart and Writings but in one's own Self. Without this understanding, the diagrams of the Chart and Writings lose all profound meaning and become simply diagrams of circles, squares and numbers. If this happens, how would it be possible to realize the theory of Nature (*xing*) and the teaching of fate (*ming*)?

42 • Illustrated explanations of the round diagram of Taijiquan's internal power

Following the example of *He-tu* (Yellow River Chart), *Taijiquan* consists of the circle of the silk-reeling method which maintains the circulation of intrinsic force, as represented in Fig. 0.42.1.

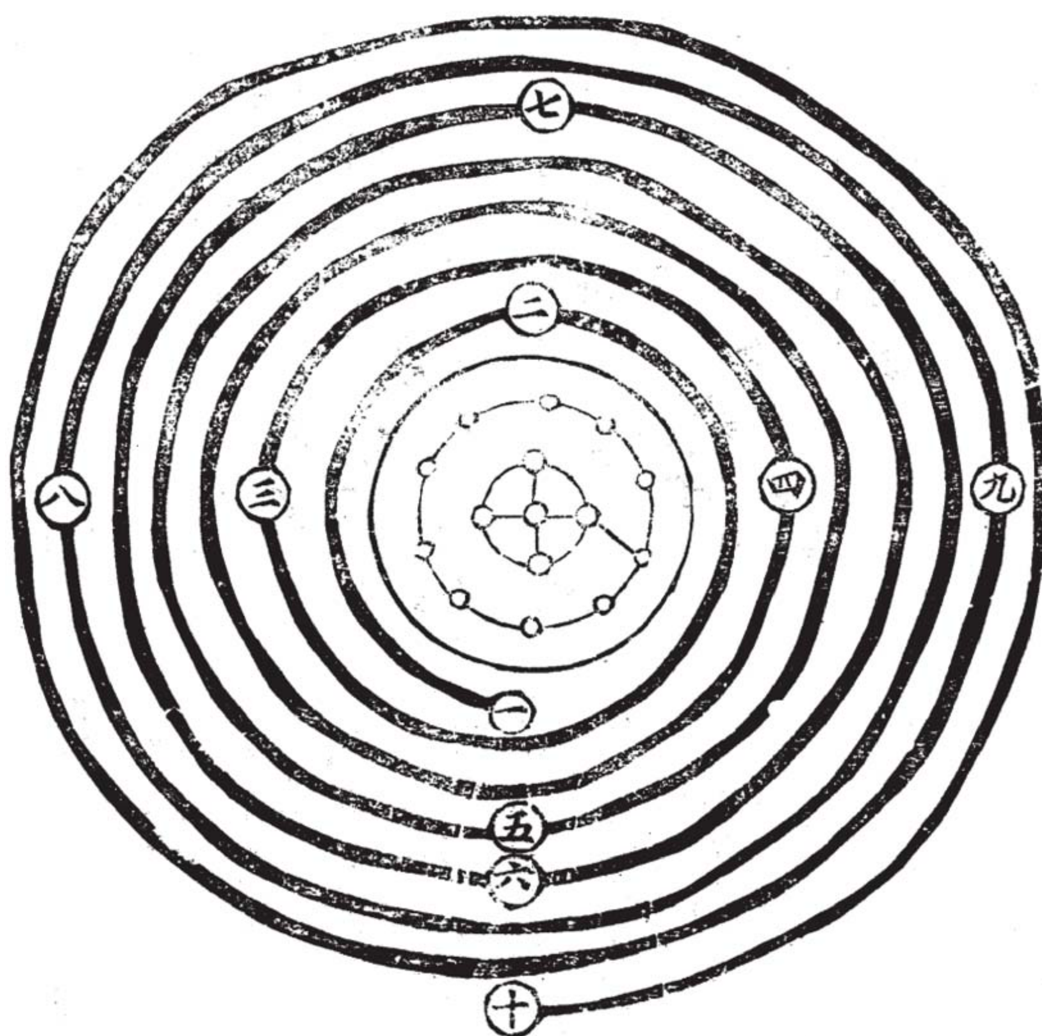


Fig. 0.42.1 Round diagram of Taijiquan's internal power

In fact, the chart of *He-tu* represents the internal organization of the energetical body, whilst the concept of energy regeneration is contained in the metaphor of reeling a silk thread from both ends around the *Taiji* circle. This double reeling causes the diagram to become twice as narrow. Another double reeling leads to the formation of the square form to produce three, five, six, seven, eight and nine-cornered diagrams. Since one produces two, but two gives birth to three and so on, the process of reproduction becomes perpetual, resulting in the regeneration of energy through the silk-reeling method. The ancient Classics put it this way, "Alternation of the sun and moon is similar to the process of interaction of the silk thread through compatible intercourse (*cuo*) and inversion (*zong*), coiling over a circular and square reel but coming out from one single source, the cocoon."

However, the current diagram (Fig. 0.42.1) does not completely explain the principle of the silk-reeling method, in so far as all four limbs also help determine the application of the principles in practice during *Taijiquan* performance.

43 • Illustrated explanations of the square diagram of Taijiquan's external form

Following the example of *Luo-shu* (Luo River Writings), *Taijiquan* also consists of the square plan of action, which depicts the maintenance of the external form, as represented in Fig. 0.43.1.

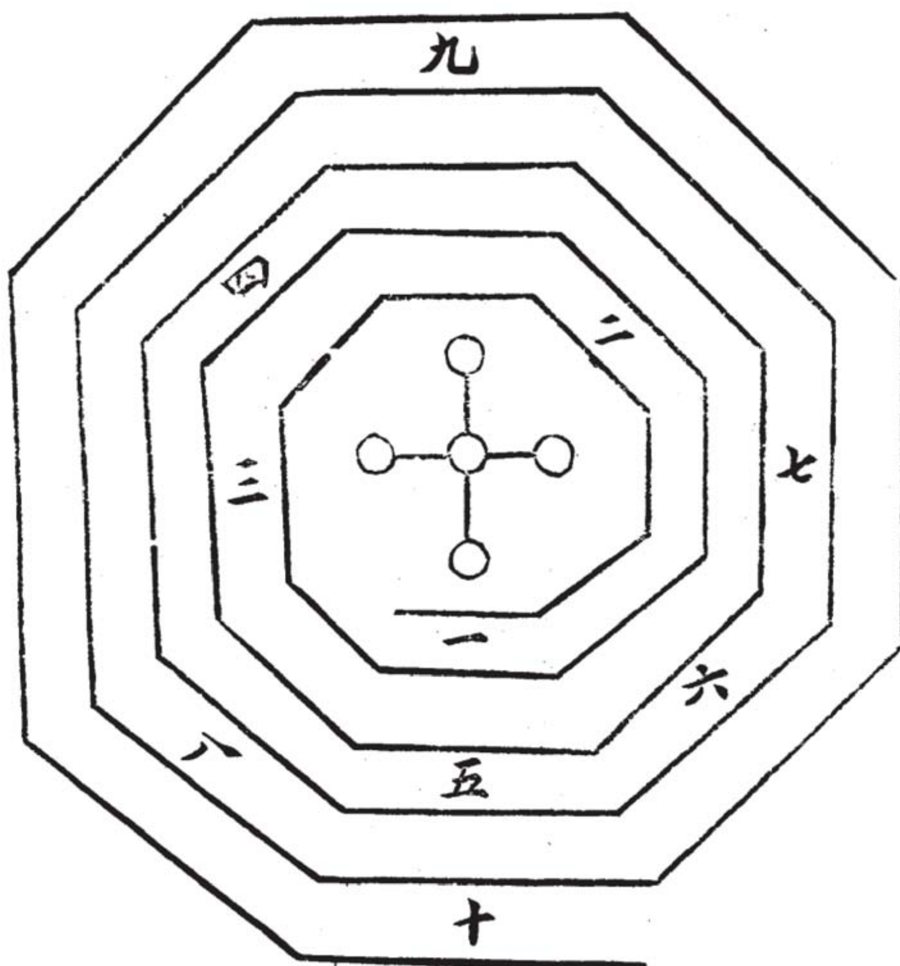


Fig. 0.43.1 Square diagram of Taijiquan's external form

In fact, the *Luo-shu* represents the square form of the external energy structure, as reflected by the saying, "Knowledge seeks the circular while action likes the square."

Externally, the structure of *Taijiquan* is arranged according to the square form, whilst internally the structure remains round. Hence, the upper part of the body is round while the lower square. Square is the form of *Taijiquan*, circular is its spirit. Above all else, this is what each *Taijiquan* learner should know.

When practicing *Taijiquan*, most movements should be performed obliquely and in circular motions, whilst internally they contain square-like elements that remain unseen.

This octagonal diagram depicts the spiral form of the *Taiji* motif. A circle is formed as a result of the interaction between the circle and square. This illustrates the principle of a square matching with a circle — the basis for the square diagram presented here.

44 • Illustrated explanations of the Taijiquan's silk-reeling method of energy regeneration

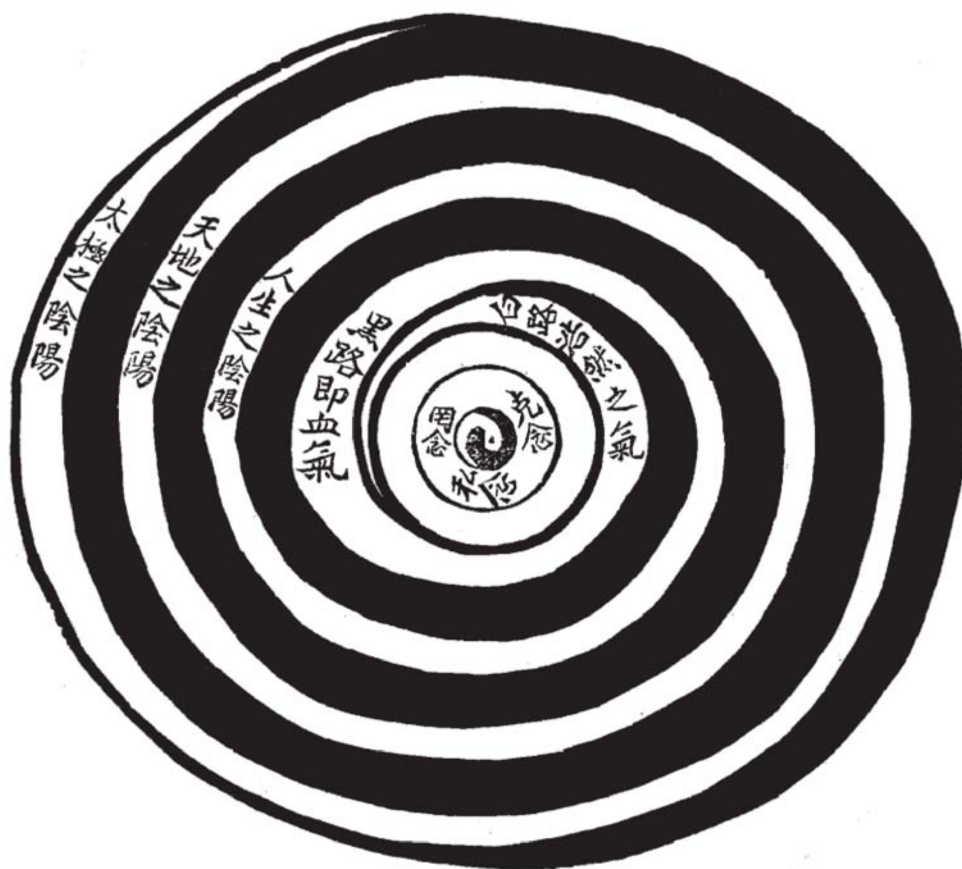


Fig. 0.44.1 Diagram of the Taijiquan's silk-reeling method of energy regeneration

Inscriptions:

❶ *Bai-lu Haoran zhi Qi* (white path of Magnificently Refined Energy);

❷ *Ke-nian* (restrained thinking): represented by the white point inside the black portion of the innermost *Taiji* circle;

❸ *Si-nian* (selfish thoughts);

❹ *Wang-nian* (deceptive thinking): represented by the black point inside the white portion of the innermost *Taiji* circle;

- ❺ *Hei-lu ji Xue Qi* (black path is blood and *qi* energy);
- ❻ *Rensheng zhi Yin-yang* (*yin* and *yang* of human life);
- ❼ *Tiandi zhi Yin-yang* (*yin* and *yang* of heaven and earth);
- ❽ *Taiji zhi Yin-yang* (*yin* and *yang* of *Taiji*).

Studying the circular *Taiji* diagram of the ancient Classics, I have realized the impossibility of learning *Taijiquan* without understanding of the silk-reeling principles of energy regeneration. The silk-reeling method consists of activating *Zhong-Qi* (Centralized Intrinsic Energy). Without understanding this, the movements cannot be understood either.

The first pair of white and black paths represents the *yin* and *yang* forms of *Taiji*, freely existing within *Wuji* or No Extremes. The second combination of white and black paths represents *Taiji* engendering Two Forms (*Liang-yi*), which are actually the *yin* and *yang* substances of heaven and earth. The third white and black path is the symbol of Man as an embodiment of *yin* and *yang qi*, as well as the Five Phases of energy (*Wu-xing*) which enable humans to survive. The fourth white path is what Mencius called *Haoran zhi Qi* or Magnificently Refined Energy; whilst the fourth black path represents the blood (*xue*) and *qi* energy of humans, which when combined with morality becomes *Zheng-qi* or Truly Refined Energy, the core of a healthy existence. The fifth white path represents the way of the mind (*xin*), by which True Refined Energy is well governed. When *qi* becomes un-regulated due to poor circulation and management, it becomes stuck. The general principle (*li*) lies within one's nature (*xing*) and is called character. The fifth black path is the human mind/heart or what sages and men of virtue called the personal mind/heart (*si-xin*).

The white point in the black portion of the innermost *Taiji* circle (Fig. 0.44.1) represents *Ke-nian* or restrained thinking, while the black point inside the white portion represents *Wang-nian* or deceptive thinking. Only sages are able to fully exercise restrained thinking and eliminate all deceptive thoughts. Deceptive thinking is what Gao-Zi called *Shi Se-xing* (nourishment of sexual desire). All humans have it. If a person can eradicate

all selfish thinking once and for all, her pure or pre-birth nature can be regained from heaven. When this happens, she will be able to move fully in accordance within Nature's structure (*Tian-ji*) during *Taijiquan* practice, and her performance will become natural and agile, revealing the original shape of *Taiji* concealed in her body.

The three large external circles stimulate the influence of *yin* and *yang*. The three internal circles indicate that *yin* and *yang* are being governed and represent what Man receives and holds in the third circle. This chart is not in fact of critical significance, but was created to aid people's understanding of *qi* regulation. The important point to note here is that all three internal circles rest within the third larger circle, whilst the third larger circle itself illustrates rests within the second one, which is placed within the first one, just like a set of nesting dolls. Hence, this diagram serves specifically to illustrate how to guard the core of one's life and the wonderful secret of regenerating *qi* — once you begin to get good at moving qi, you can protect your life; and if you can protect your life, then you will be able to restore your nature. Once you can restore your nature by reproducing your intrinsic energy and accumulating it within yourself, you will be able to rely on your vital resources. That is why *Taijiquan* is considered beneficial both for your body and mind, as well as for your nature and fate. The sages of antiquity used to say that training one's body depends on the restoration of one's nature. In other words, the ability to protect one's life and regulate *qi* flow forms the core of a trained body, a cultivated character and a restored nature.

45 • Illustrated explanations of Wuji or No Extremes

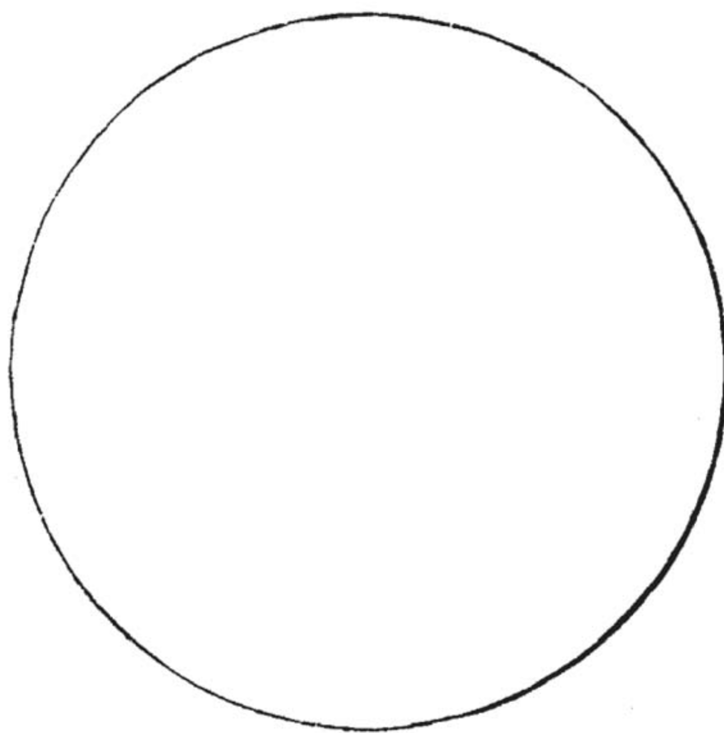


Fig. 0.45.1 Diagram of Wuji of No Extremes

The empty circle I have drawn here (Fig. 0.45.1) is entitled *Wuji* or No Extremes. One may ask the reason for this. It is simple: heaven and earth and all myriad things in between have come out of nothing (non-existence) to become something (existence). But once in existence, all myriad things and conditions start to become countless.

This correlates exactly to *Taijiquan* practice: the primary source of your skills is Nothingness, but after mastering some techniques that truly work, you can cultivate the state of 'No-Minded Mind' (*wu-xin*), the stage at which your transformations and internal changes can occur unseen without leaving visual traces. Hence what exists returns to non-existence; what is known as colour is actually colourlessness; what is known as colourlessness is colour; and so coloured colourlessness is the same as colourless colour. The empty circle conveys all these ideas at once.

46 • Illustrated explanations of the silk-reeling method applied in the human body (front view)



Fig. 0.46.1 Diagram of the silk-reeling method applied in the human body (front view)

Inscriptions:

❶ The primal source is in the mind/heart;

❷ The Hui-Yin acupoint, from which the front channel Ren-mai originates, is placed below Qi-hai.

The whole body consists of a network of internal and external energy channels, both of which become apparent when a person moves. One channel runs from the front of the left hand through to the back of the right hand, then wraps around the front of the right hand and returns to the back of the left hand in a rotating flow (*shun*) to close (*he*) or accumulate the energy.

Another channel accumulates energy from the inner left side of the body and the back of the right side. There is also a channel through which energy returns to be accumulated at the back. All the energy channels function optimally when specific postures and bodily movements are performed naturally and smoothly.

When the hand *qi* flows from the heel to the big toe thereby closing the loop and gathering energy, you can take a firm stance. Meanwhile, intrinsic force produced in the mind/heart enters one's bones and fills the skin, coalescing the body into a single stream of power. This intrinsic force is the *qi* that comes out from the mind/heart. When the energy is generated and regenerated from a central power source (your mind/heart), it becomes *Zhong-qi* or Centralized Intrinsic Energy. When it is nourished constantly, it is converted into *Haoran zhi Qi* or Magnificently Refined Energy.

47 ✦ Illustrated explanations of the silk-reeling method applied in the human body (back view)

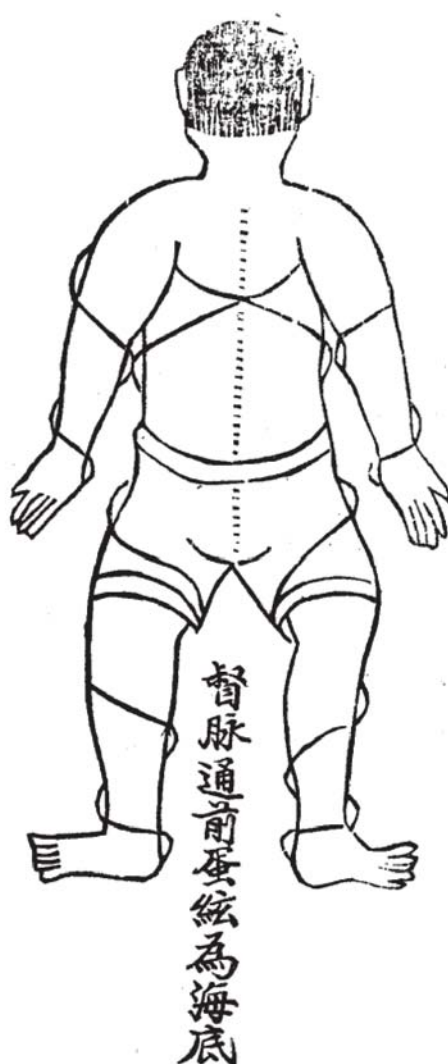


Fig. 0.47.1 Diagram of the silk-reeling method applied in the human body (back view)

Inscription:

- springing at acupoint Hai-di[31] the back channel Du-mai runs up along the dotted line to connect to the front channel.

[31] Translated as 'sea bottom', another name for acupoint Hui-Yin at the perineum.

The energy accumulated at the back of the body and the crown of the head is called *Ding-jin* or Top Energy (or Top Intrinsic Force). The spine forms the dividing line below which there is the small of the back. The central bone is the backbone and both kidneys are placed at the back.

Whether the foot is empty or solid depends on the position of the hand - when the hand is empty, the corresponding foot is empty too; if the hand is solid, then the corresponding foot is also solid.

48 • Treatise on Taijiquan's silk-reeling method

The silk-reeling method of *Taijiquan* includes various forms of coiling: forward and backward, left and right, upward and downward, inward and outward, small and big, direct rotation (*shun*) and reverse rotation (*ni*). The methods are of paramount importance when using the *Yin* (attracting) and *Jin* (advancing) techniques. For both, the reeling works in a coiling form, no matter what sort of applications or postures are employed. Once the coiling begins, *yin* and *yang* start to interact with each other, changing their original condition. Practioners of *Taijiquan* may give the external impression of being physically weak, but in terms of state of mind (*shen-yun*), they possesses hard as well as the soft qualities which may be used equally at will or according to situations such as hand-to-hand combat. Non-practitioners find it hard to reconcile delicate *Taiji* postures such as relaxed and dropped shoulders and sunk-down elbows, which suggest a maiden's comportment, with the more aggressive tiger-like stances expected of a combatant.

One's hands must function like a balance, such as when you weigh something in your hands, you can feel its weight. Likewise, the basic aim of martial arts practice is to cultivate the ability to 'weigh' the balance between you and the opponent with your heart/mind, so that you can respond accordingly, moving forward or backward, slow or fast. A person who is able to weigh visible signs and discern the invisible balances with their hands, adjusting his movement and weighting accordingly, is known to possess Magical Hands.

49 • Four verses on the silk-reeling method of Taijiquan

1. Seven-characters a line verses composed in old style

Verse 1

Motion gives birth to *yang* while stillness to yin;
Motion and stillness both have the same source.
Truly, you'll find joy getting to the center of circle
And seeing the Truth through deliberate circular movements.

Verse 2

Yin and *yang* have no beginning and no end;
The mechanisms of your nature in producing changes
Reside in coming and going, bending and extending
Throughout growth and decline to realize the Truth.
So turn round freely and move smoothly and with agility.

Verse 3

At times it is clear, at times it is not: closing, opening,
Hanging on, tearing, lifting up – all connect within the circle.
Much carving and polishing you have to do
Before the secret of enlightenment is disclosed.
But with sudden inspiration you will see through it
As if through a clear glass that screens it from you.

2. *Five-characters a line verse composed in the old style*

Realm of the Principle has no scope at all,
But you can find its straight connections
With justice and sincerity.
For three years not to peep out of the yard,
Having one single will and focused spirit;
It is necessary to practice oneself,
Following a good master,
As well as to pay visits to worthy friends.
Follow the established practice in all respects,
And a faint gleam of enlightenment will dawn.
The next layer is deeper than the previous step,
But the meaning of all of them is fathomless.
Opening picks on closing;
Closing alternates with opening in sequence.
Sometimes your are simply drawn into victory –
You are unable to stop practicing
Even though you would like to.
Devote much time and maximize your efforts,
And your mastery will grow daily.
If only there is no obstacle,
You will suddenly realize the Great Voidness.

50 ✦ A Song on diagram of the Twelve Principle and [Eight] Miraculous Channels

1. Eleven acupoints allocated to the Hand-Tai-Yin-Lungs channel

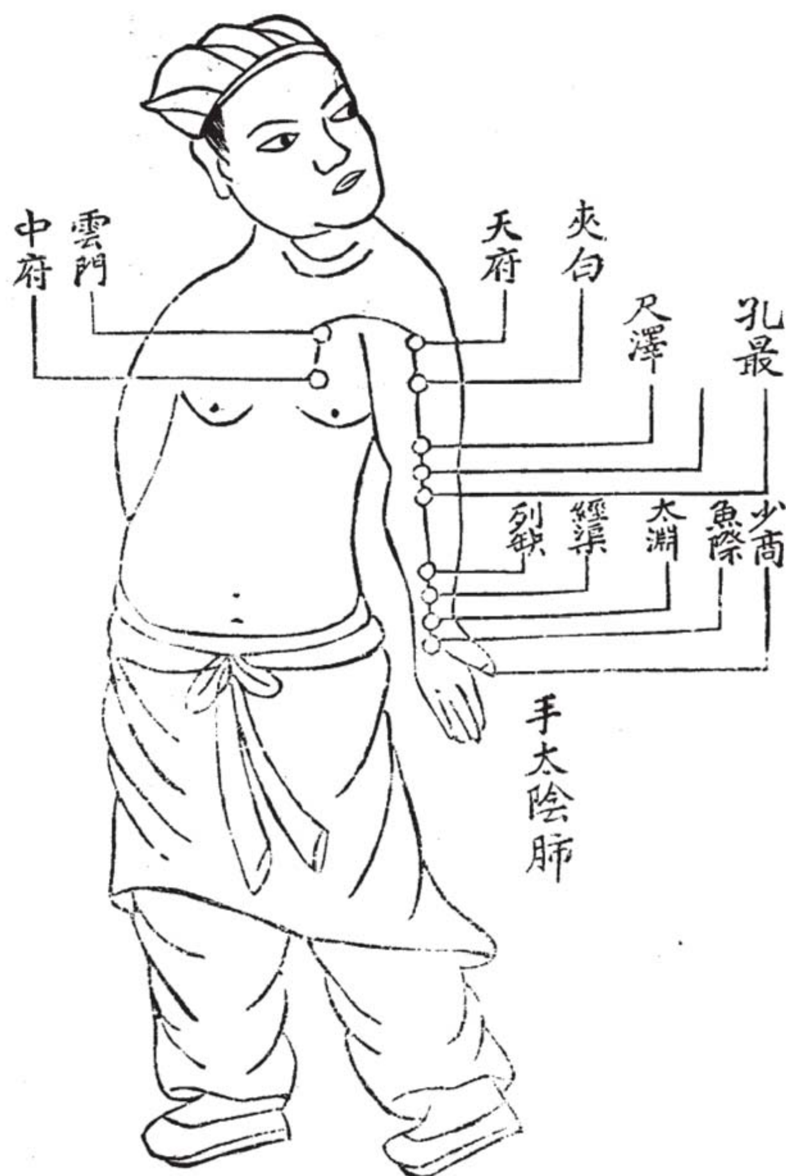


Fig. 0.50.1 Diagram of eleven acupoints allocated to the Hand-Tai-Yin-Lungs channel

The Song of the Lungs Channel acupoints is quoted from the *Huang-di Nei-jing* ('Inner Energy Classics of the Yellow Emperor').

The Song[32] reads like this:

> *The Tai-Yin-Lungs channel springs from the Zhong-fu acupoint,*
> *Which is about one cun[33] below Yun-men;*
> *The Yun-men's armillary sphere consists of four acupoints[34]*
> *To cover another six cun aside*
> *In the area below the shoulder joints.*
> *Tian-fu is placed three cun below the humeral bone;*
> *Jia-bai is located five cun above the elbow.*
> *Chi-ze can be found just in the middle of the elbow's line*
> *While Kong-zui is seven cun above the wrist.*
> *Lie-que is placed 1.5 cun above the wrist's front;*
> *Jing-qu is allocated to the carpal cavity.*
> *Tai-yuan is at the striated bone of the palm;*
> *Yu-ji is sited at the midpoint of the first metacarpal bone.*
> *Shao-shang is located inside the thumb's end.*
> *These acupoints are like the acupuncture needles*
> *Used in treating numerous diseases.*

[32] The Song of the Lungs Channel describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.1.
[33] about 2.5 cm.
[34] These four acupoints take the form of the first four stars in the bowl of the Big Dipper.

2. Twenty acupoints allocated to the Hand-Yang-Ming-Large Intestine channel

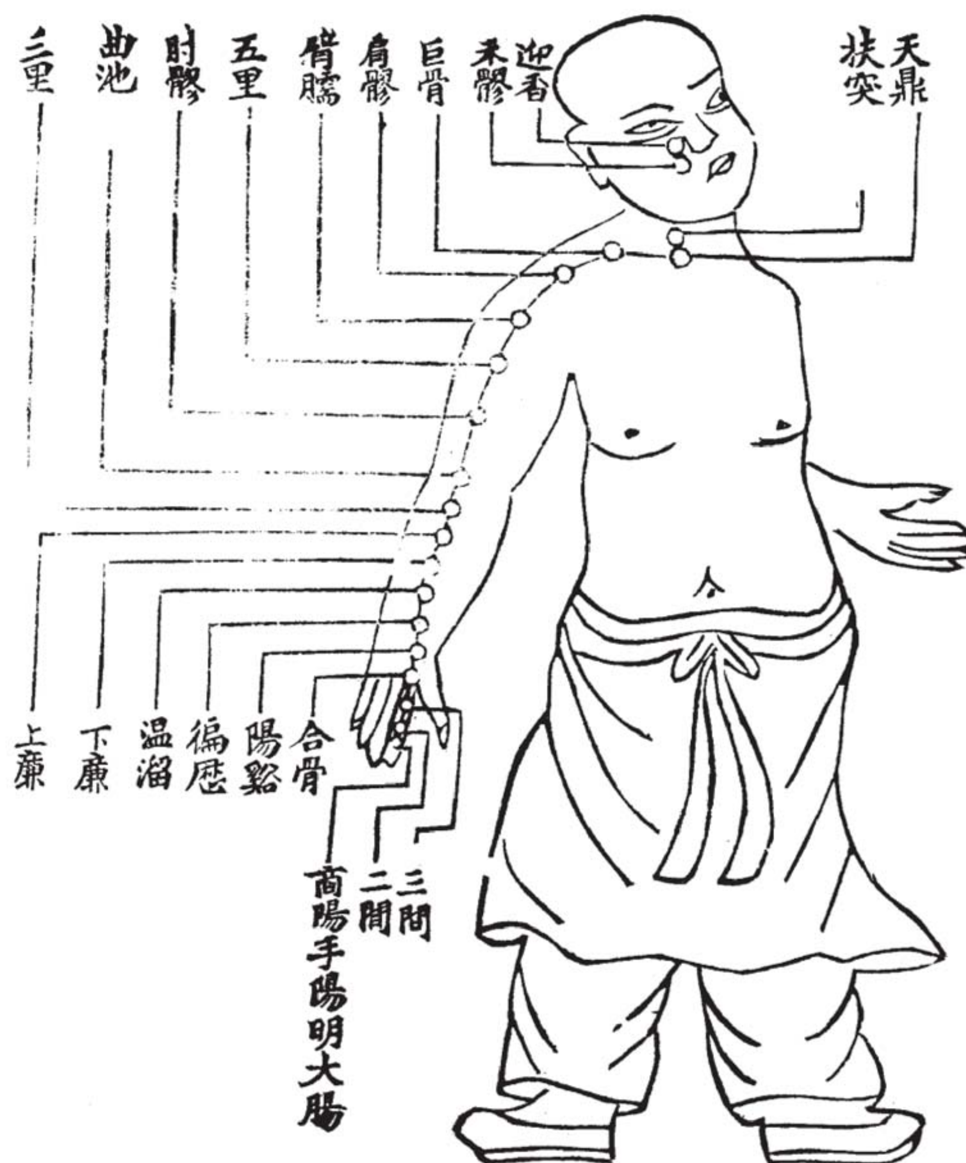


Fig. 0.50.2 Diagram of twenty acupoints allocated to the Hand-Yang-Ming-Large Intestine channel

The Song[35] reads like this:

Shang-yang is placed inside the index finger;
Er-jian is found at the origin of the phalanx.
San-jian is located at the bottom of the cavity
Between the thumb and the index finger;
He-gu is the midpoint on the radial side
Between the first and second metacarpal bones.
Yang-huo is the midpoint on the wrist's upside;
Bian-li is located three cun above the wrist.
Wen-liu resides five cun above the wrist;
Qu-chi you'll find five cun from Xia-lian.
There are three cun from Shang-lian to Qu-chi,
And only two cun from San-li to Qu-chi.
Qu-chi is on the very top of the elbow joint
While Zhou-lian lies closer to the ulna from the outside.
The midpoint on the large muscle is called Wu-li,
Which sits three cun above the ulna;
And Bi-xu is placed in seven cun above the ulna.
Jian-liao sits exactly at the end of the shoulder joint.
Ju-gu is the midpoint located on the shoulder,
While Tian-ding is on a line along the larynx, four cun aside.
Fu-tu is placed three cun aside from Tian-ding;
He-liao is five cun aside from the Shui-gou acupoint.
Ying-xiang is located one cun above He-liao;
The acupoints of the large intestine channel
Are clearly allocated in this arrangement.

[35] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.2.

3. Forty-five acupoints allocated to the Leg-Yang-Ming-Stomach channel

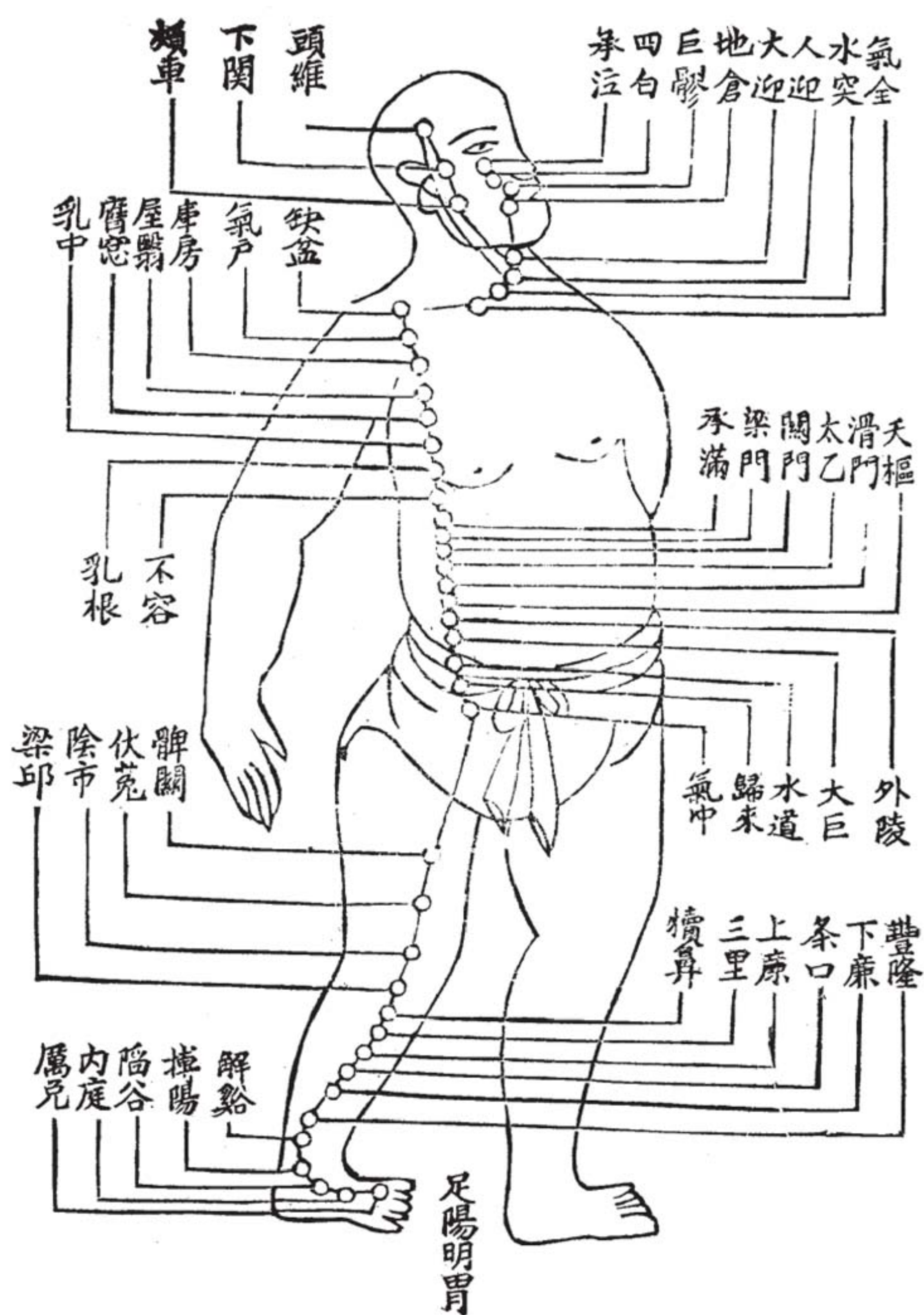


Fig. 0.50.3 Diagram of forty-five acupoints allocated to the Leg-Yang-Ming-Stomach channel

The Song[36] reads like this:

The channel allocated to the stomach is the Leg-Yang-Ming,
Which starts its flow from Cheng-qi.
Seven fen[37] below the eye there is Si-bai;
Another cun down you'll find Ju-liao
Located at eight fen next to the nostril.
Di-cang sits at four fen from the angle of the mouth;
The next acupoint is Da-ying located a cun below the chin.
Jia-che is at eight fen below the ear;
Xia-guan is placed on the artery in front of the ear.
Tou-wei is in line with Shen-ting, a fifth acupoint aside;
Ren-ying sits 1.5 cun aside from the larynx.
Shui-tu is on the front muscle below acupoint Ren-Ying;
Below Shui-tu you will find acupoint Qi-she.
After Qi-she is Que-pen placed on the clavicle;
Both acupoints are 1.5 cun apart in parallel.
Qi-hu manifests as a sphere with an area of four cun,
Lying 6.4 cun above the nipple.
Then Ku-fang, Wu-weng and Ying-chuang follow on,
While Ru-zhong sits exactly in the center of the nipple.
The next is Ru-gen located below the nipple;
The distance between the two makes 1.6 cun.
You need to go about four cun downwards to reach the central line
And bring the previous line of acupoints to the mainstream[38].
Bu-rong is three cun from Ju-jue,
And almost half that distance from You-men.
The acupoints which follow are Cheng-man and Liang-men,
Then Guan-men, Tai-yi and Hua-rou-men in sequence,
With only one cun between them all.
The line runs three cun beside the parallel central channel;

[36] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.3.
[37] about 3.5 cm.
[38] the Ren-mai channel.

From Tian-shu to the navel is about two cun.
Another cun downward and Tian-shu is followed by Wai-ling,
While two cun downward is the place of the Da-ju acupoint.
Four cun downward from Tian-shu and you can find Shui-dao,
While at distance of six cun you'll meet with Gui-lai,
Which is two cun beside the mainstream.
Qi-chong is about a cun above the scrotum,
and four cun beside the main channel.
Pi-guan is two feet above the knee;
Fu-tu is allocated six cun above the knee.
Yin-shi is placed three cun above the knee,
While Liang-qiu is two cun above it.
Du-bi is located in the middle of the popliteal space;
San-li is to cun below the knee.
Shang-lian is located six cun below the knee,
While Tiao-kou is seven cun below it.
Eight cun below the knee you'll find Xia-lian;
Nine cun below there is the Feng-long acupoint
Located eight cun above the ankle and aside from Xia-lian.
Jie-xi is placed 6.5 cun above Nei-ting;
Chong-Yang is five cun above it.
Xian-gu is two cun above Nei-ting,
And Nei-ting is in the cavity between the second and third toes.
Li-dui sits at the end of the second toe
To mark the line of stomach in proper order.

4. Twenty-two acupoints allocated to the Leg-Tai-Yin Spleen channel

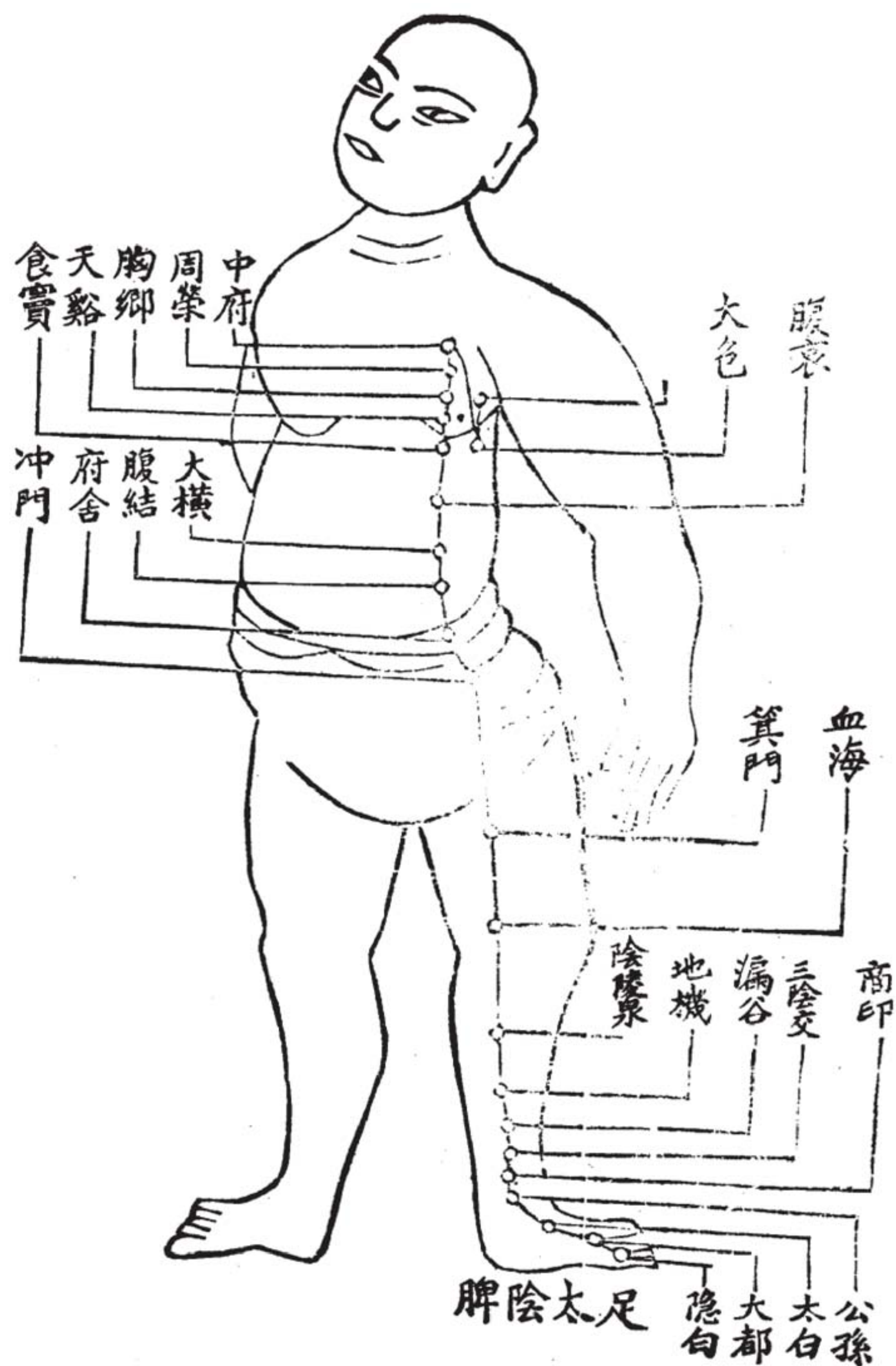


Fig. 0.50.4 Diagram of twenty-two acupoints allocated to the Leg-Tai-Yin Spleen channel

The Song[39] reads like this:

Yin-bai is located inside the big toe's end;
In the phalanx cavity Da-dou is placed.
Tai-bai is inside the big toe's root
Followed by Gong-sun,
Which is located one cun after.
Shang-yin is placed inside the ankle,
And three cun above is San-yin-jiao.
Lou-gu is placed six cun above the ankle,
While seven cun above it you'll find Ji-chao.
Yin-ling-quan is placed below the inside of the knee;
Xue-hai is in the inner thigh above the knee.
Ji-men sits in the medial side of the thigh;
The artery must run above the leg's muscles.
Chong-men sits one feet and five cun below Qi-men;
Fu-she is placed nine cun below Qi-men, Fu-jie at 6.8 cun;
Da-heng at 5.5 cun and Fu-ai at 2 cun below.
Allocated to the liver channel, Qi-men
Leads the line of acupoints mentioned here,
At 4.5 cun beside Ju-jue on the mainstream channel
Is linked to the acupoints of spleen channel in a chaotic way.
From that place upward there is Shi-dou;
Tian-xi, Xiong-xiang and Zhou-rong are acupoints
Each located in the area that is less than six cun long;
1.6 cun above you'll find Zhong-fu.
Da-bao is situated six cun below the armpit;
Yuan-ye is placed 3.5 cun below the armpit
And allocated to the gallbladder channel.

[39] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.4.

5. Nine acupoints allocated to the Hand-Shao-Yin-Heart channel



FIG. 0.50.5 DIAGRAM OF NINE ACUPOINTS ALLOCATED TO THE HAND-SHAO-YIN-HEART CHANNEL

The Song[40] reads like this:

> *The Shao-Yin channel of the heart springs up from Ji-quan;*
> *Through muscles below the armpit the arteries enter the chest.*
> *Qing-ling is three cun above the elbow;*
> *Shao-hai is just five fen from the ulna.*
> *Ling-dao is just 1.5 cun above the palm;*
> *Tong-li is next to it and one cun away from the palm*
> *While Yin-xi a half cun closer to the palm.*
> *Shen-men lies at the end of the wrist line;*

Shao-fu is in the midpoint parallel to Lao-gong.

Shao-chong is located inside the little finger's end.

Lao-gong[41] is allocated to the channel of the pericardium on the right palm and opposite to acupoint Shao-fu in the left palm, associated with the heart channel.

[40] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.5.
[41] The center of the palm.

6. Nineteen acupoints allocated to the Hand-Tai-Yang-Small Intestine channel

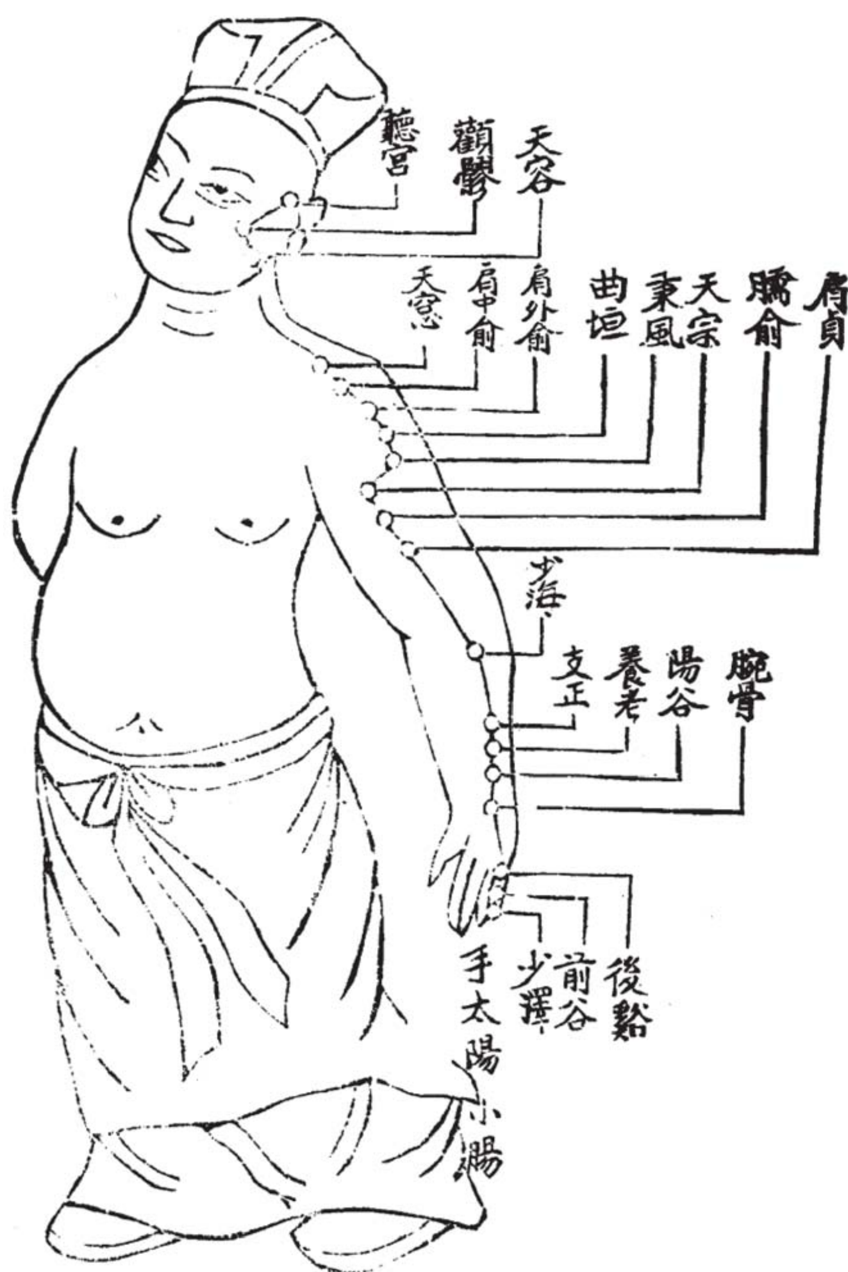


Fig. 0.50.6 Diagram of nineteen acupoints allocated to the Hand-Tai-Yang-Small Intestine channel

The Song[42] reads like this:

> *Shao-ze is placed outside the end of the little finger*
> *While Qian-gu is outside of the first phalanx.*
> *Clenching your fist, you'll find Hou-xi*
> *At the root of the little finger;*
> *Wan-gu sits near the wrist line on the carpal bone.*
> *Yang-gu lies at the bottom of the carpal bone's cavity;*
> *One cun above the wrist there is acupoint Yang-lao.*
> *Zhi-zheng is placed five cun above the wrist,*
> *While Shao-hai sits exactly five fen from the ulna.*
> *Jian-zhen is located two bones below the shoulder-blade;*
> *Nao-shu hides in the cavity under the humeral bone.*
> *Tian-zong is in the cavity just below Bing-feng,*
> *While Bing-feng lies in the cavity on the shoulder.*
> *Qu-yuan is placed midpoint in the shoulder's cavity –*
> *Followed by Wai-shu just one cun away;*
> *Jian-zhong is three cun away from Da-shu,*
> *While Tian-chuang hides in the cavity near Fu-tu.*
> *Tian-rong is below the ear and follows Qu-jia;*
> *Quan-liao is located at the end of the cheek-bone.*
> *Ting-gong is placed in the ear, large as a bean.*
> *All these acupoints are allocated*
> *To the Hand-Tai-Yang- Small Intestine channel.*

[42] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.6.

7. Twenty-seven acupoints allocated to the Leg-Shao-Yin-Kidneys channel

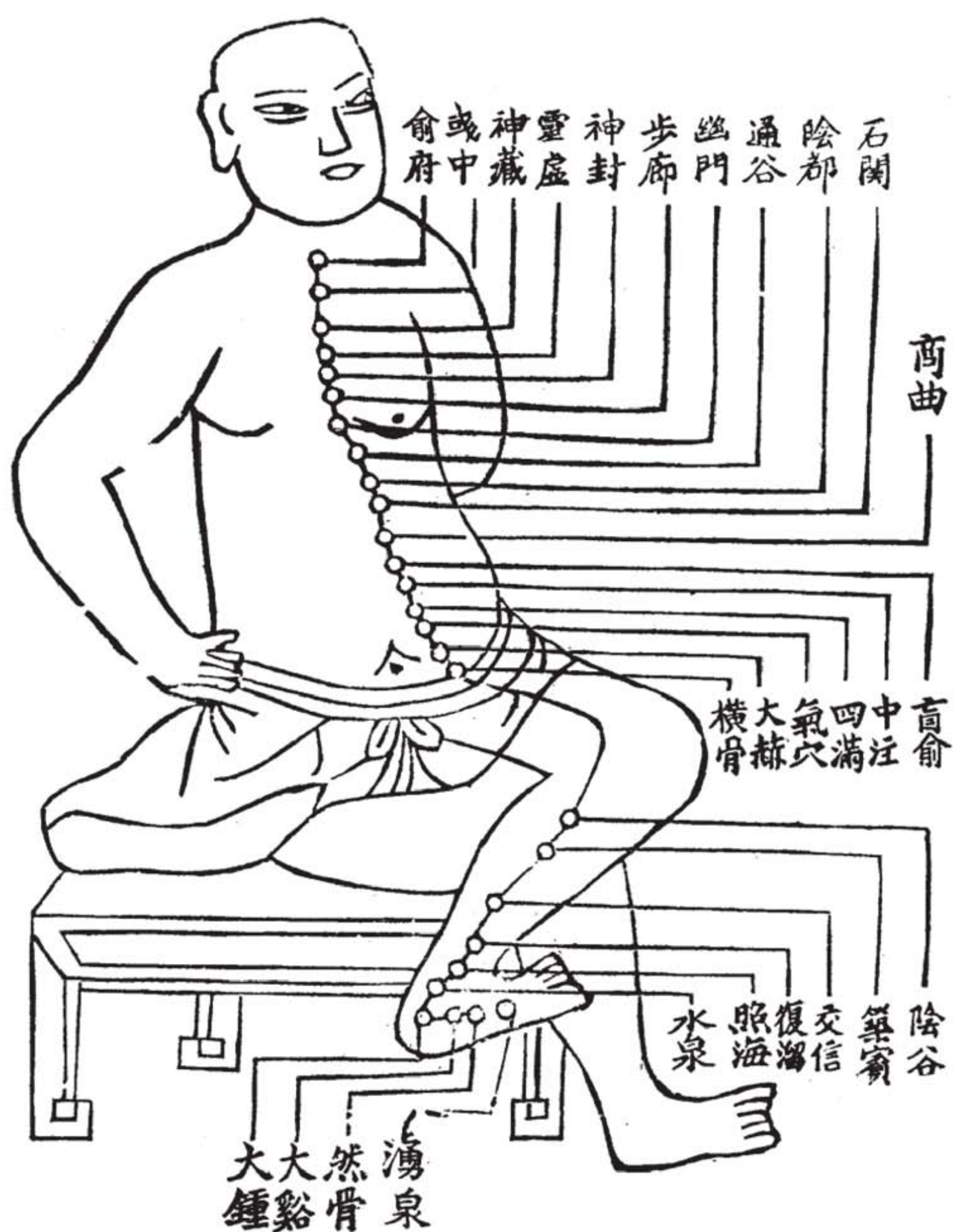


Fig. 0.50.7 Diagram of twenty-seven acupoints allocated to the Leg-Shao-Yin-Kidneys channel

The Song[43] reads like this:

> *Yong-quan sits in the center of the sole,*
> *While you'll find Ran-gu one cun below the ankle.*
> *Tai-xi is on the heel behind the ankle;*
> *Da-zhong sits nearby the center of the heel.*
> *Shui-quan you'll see one cun above Tai-xi;*
> *Zhao-hai is just four fen below the ankle.*
> *Fu-liu is located two cun above the ankle;*
> *Next to this place is acupoint Jiao-xin.*
> *Between the two acupoints lies a muscle,*
> *Running behind Tai-yang and in front of Shao-yin.*
> *Zhu-bin is the midpoint inside of the shank;*
> *Yin-gu sits below the inside of the knee.*
> *Heng-gu, Da-he and Qi-xue, as well as Si-man*
> *And Zhong-zhu are situated as a joint line*
> *Separated by intervals of half a cun.*
> *However, these intervals can be increased up to one cun.*
> *The next Mang-shu is one cun above*
> *And a half cun beside the navel.*
> *Above Mang-shu there are Shang-qu and Shi-guan,*
> *And then Yin-dou, Tong-gu and You-men,*
> *A distance of five fen lies between them.*
> *The next six acupoints have an interval of one cun*
> *And are named Bu-lang, Shen-feng, Ling-xu,*
> *Shen-zang, Huo-zhong and Shu-fu respectively.*
> *The intervals between them can reach two cun,*
> *But all the six acupoints are very similar*
> *In the area of six cun up and down.*
> *Shu-fu is two cun from the armillary sphere,*
> *To get the law means to succeed*
> *In cultivating your body.*

[43] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.7.

8. *Sixty-three acupoints allocated to the Leg-Tai-Yang-Bladder channel*

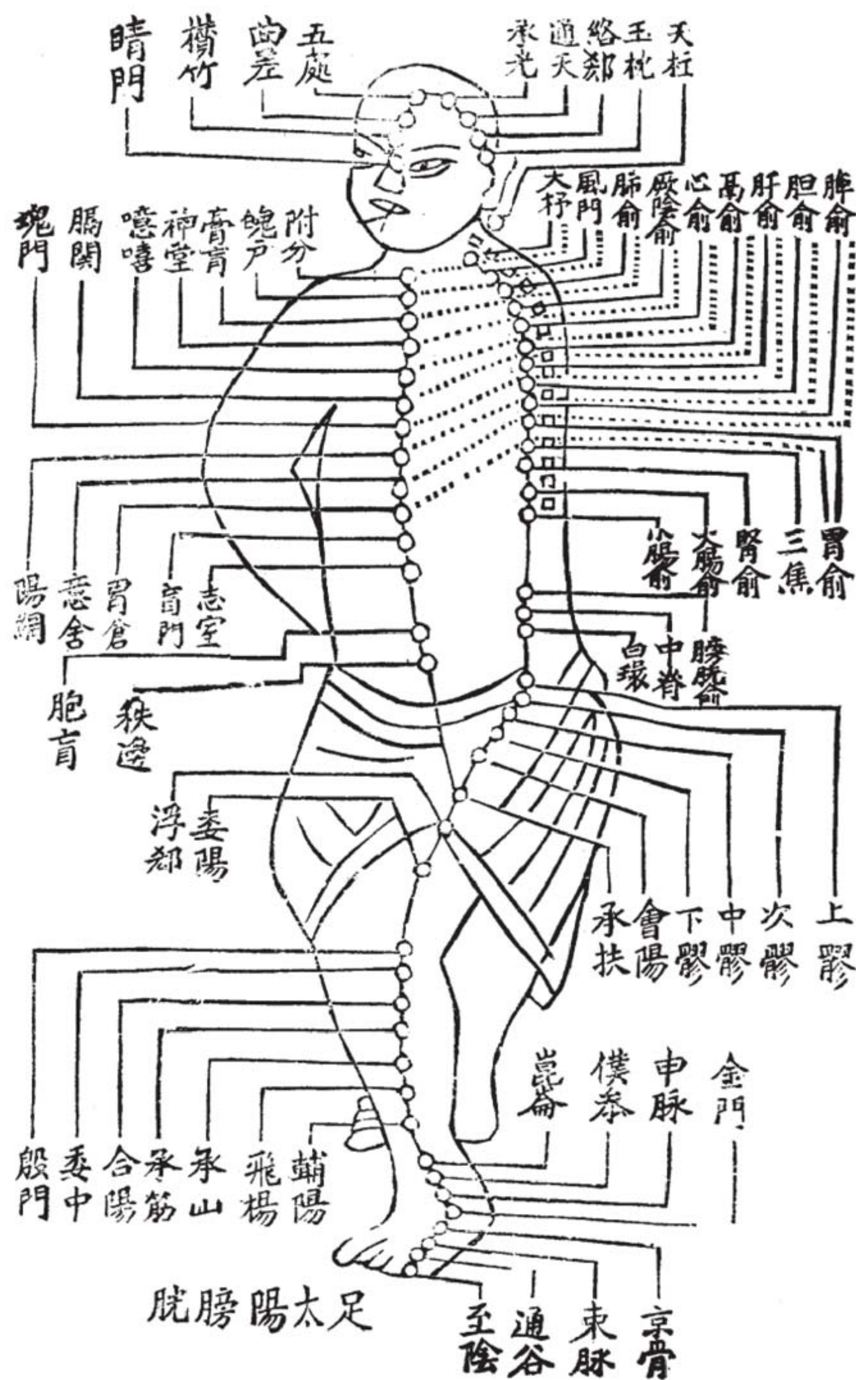


Fig. 0.50.8 Diagram of sixty-three acupoints allocated to the Leg-Tai-Yang-Bladder channel

The Song [44] reads like this:

The Leg-Tai-Yang-Bladder channel
Springs from Qing-ming in the inner canthus
And rises up to Zan-zhu in the brow's cavity,
And then to Qu-cha, five fen above the hairline.
Wu-chu sits one cun above the hairline
While Cheng-guang 2.5 cun above it.
The Tong-tian, Luo-xi, Yu-zhen acupoints
Are placed at an interval of one cun and five fen.
Yu-zhen is one cun and three fen beside Jia-nao,
Placed on the occipital bone two cun above the hairline
At the back of the head.
Tian-zhu is located at the middle of the back hairline
In the cavity outside the large muscle on the neck.
One cun beside the vertebra there are five acupoints:
Da-shu (first vertebra), Feng-men (second vertebra),
Fei-shu (lungs, third vertebra), Jue-Yin (fourth vertebra)
And Xin-shu (heart) corresponds to the fifth vertebra.
Ge-shu (diaphragm) corresponds to the seventh vertebra;
Gan-shu (liver) to the ninth
And Dan-shu (gallbladder) to the tenth.
Pi-shu (spleen) is allocated to the eleventh vertebra,
While Wei-shu (stomach) to the twelfth.
San-jiao (Triple Warmer) correlates with the thirteenth vertebra,
Shen-shu (kidneys) with the fourteenth one.
Da-chang-shu (large intestine) is the sixteenth vertebra
While Xiao-chang-shu (small intestine) the eighteenth,
And Pang-guang-shu (bladder) the nineteenth one.
Zhong- lü-nei-shu is allocated to the twentieth vertebra;
Bai-huan corresponds to the twenty-first one
To complete the above-mentioned list of acupoints.
There are still Shang-liao, Ci-liao, Zhong-liao
And Xia-liao – the four acupoints correlated with
The intervertebral space at the small of the back.

[44] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.8.

Hui-yang is located near the coccygeal bone
To complete the second line of acupoints located on the back.
Again, now three cun from the spine aside,
You'll find Fu-fen corresponding to the second vertebra.
Po-hu is allocated to the third and Gao-mang to the fourth,
While Shen-tang correlates with the fifth vertebra.
Yi-xi is allocated to the sixth and Be-guan to seventh;
Hun-men to the ninth and Yang-gang to the tenth vertebra.
Yi-she corresponds to the eleventh vertebra
While Wei-cang to the twelth.
Mang-men correlates with the thirteenth vertebra,
Zhi-shi, correspondents with the fourteenth.
Bao-mang the nineteenth, while Zhi-bian the twentieth
To complete the third line of acupoints located on the back.
Cheng-fu is located at the bottom of the gluteal line;
Followed by Fu-xi which sits six fen below Cheng-fu,
While Wei-Yang sits 1.6 cun below Cheng-fu.
Yin-men is placed a whole six cun below Cheng-fu
Exactly between two tendons at the back of the knee.
Wei-zhong sits on the line of the back of the knee
And three cun below you'll find the He-yang acupoint.
Cheng-jin is seven cun above the heel
Placed in the middle of the central line on the calf.
Cheng-shan which follows is at the end of the calf;
Fei-yang sits on the outside seven cun above the ankle.
Fu-yang is on the outside three cun above the ankle;
Hun-lun is placed at the bottom of the ankle's cavity.
Pu-can is located below the anklebone,
While Shen-mai five fen below the anklebone.
Jin-men sits one cun below Shen-mai;
Jing-gu is placed outside the sole's edge
On the border of the red and white skin.
Shu-mai is rooted at the bottom of the foot edge's cavity;
Tong-gu is placed deep in the cavity before the little toe.
Zhi-yin is located outside the little toe
To complete the acupoints of the Tai-Yang channel
In order to regenerate the circle again.

9. Treatise on relativity according to the Five Zang organs

The Po-hu acupoint[45] is allocated to Fei-shu (lungs);

Shen-tang[46] correlates with Xin-shu (heart);

Hun-men[47] corresponds to Gan-shu (liver);

Yi-she[48] is allocated to Pi-shu (spleen);

Zhi-shi[49] correlates with Shen-shu (*kidneys*).

10. The Five Spirits allocated to the Five Zang organs

The Five Spirits correlate with the Five Zang organs, and are stored according to the principles in the following sequence:

Lung stores the earthly Soul (*bo*);

Heart stores Spirit (*shen*);

Liver stores the Heavenly Soul (*hun*);

Spleen stores Consciousness (*yi*);

Kidneys store Volition (*zhi*).

Bai-huan-shu is allocated to Yao-shu of the mainstream.

[45] Literally translated as 'Dwelling of the Earthly Soul'.
[46] Literally translated as 'Palace of Spirit'.
[47] Literally translated as 'Doors of the Heavenly Soul'.
[48] Literally translated as 'Mansion of Consciousness'.
[49] Literally translated as 'Hall of Volition'.

11. Nine acupoints allocated to the Hand-Jue-Yin-Pericardium channel



Fig. 0.50.9 Diagram of nine acupoints allocated to the Hand-Jue-Yin-Pericardium channel

The Song[50] reads like this:

The Pericardium channel starts from the place
Called Tian-di[51]*,*
Criss-crossed between the nipple and armpit at 1.3 cun.
Tian-quan curves two cun below the armpit,
While Qu-ze is located at the bottom of the elbow's cavity.
Followed by Xi-men which is placed five cun toward the wrist;
Jian-shi sits five cun above the wrist.
Nei-guan is two cun away from the wrist;
Da-ling is the midpoint on the line of the wrist.
Lao-gong you can find clenching the middle finger,
While Zhong-zhi is at the very end of it.

[50] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.9.
[51] heaven and earth.

12. Twenty-four acupoints allocated to the Hand-Shao-Yang-Triple Warmer channel

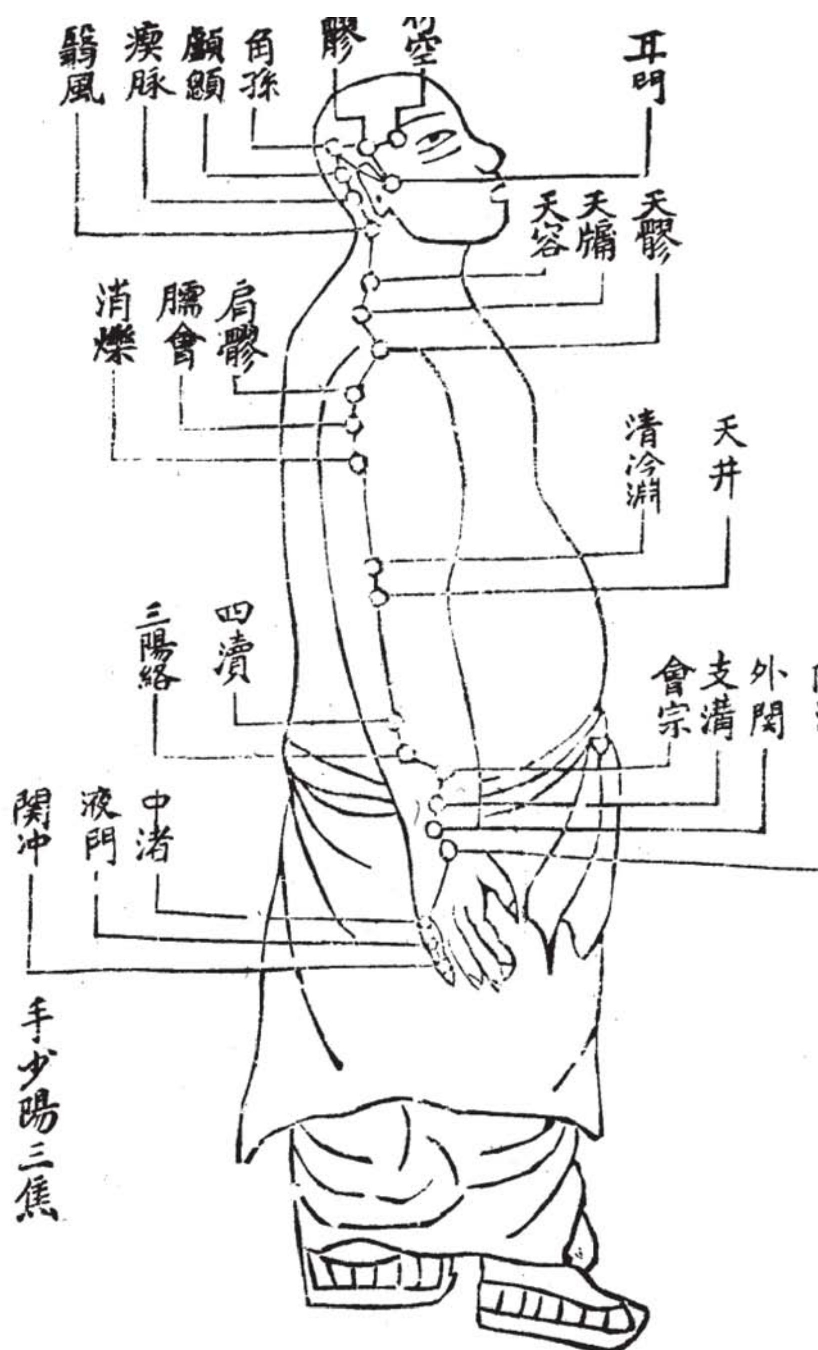


Fig. 0.50.10 Diagram of twenty-four acupoints allocated to the Hand-Shao-Yang-Triple Warmer channel

The Song[52] reads like this:

> *Guan-chong sits outside the end of the fourth finger;*
> *Ye-men is in the cavity between the fourth finger and the next.*
> *Zhong-zhu is placed one cun above Ye-men;*
> *Yang-chi is located just in the outer cavity of the wrist.*
> *Wai-guan sits two cun above the wrist*
> *While Zhi-gou is three cun above the wrist.*
> *Hui-zong is also three cun above the wrist*
> *And placed a little inside from Wai-guan*
> *To be allocated to the most attentive request.*
> *San-yang-luo is four cun above the wrist;*
> *Then follows Si-dou which sits five cun from the elbow.*
> *Tian-jing is one cun above the ulna*
> *Located in the cavity between the two bones.*
> *Qing-leng-yuan is two cun above the elbow;*
> *Xiao-shuo is the midpoint on the upper arm.*
> *Nao-hui sits three cun below Jian-liao,*
> *While Jian-liao is at the bottom of the shoulder's cavity.*
> *Tian-jiao lies in the cavity near the neck;*
> *Tian-you is below Tian-rong.*
> *Yi-feng sits in the cavity behind the ear;*
> *Qi-mai is on the blue vein behind the ear.*
> *Lu-xin is also placed on the blue vein behind the ear;*
> *Jiao-sun is the midpoint above the auricle.*
> *Er-men is located on the flesh in front of the ear;*
> *He-liao sits on the artery behind the ear.*
> *If you want to know the whereabouts of Si-zhu-kong,*
> *Seek attentively for the cavity behind the eyebrow.*

[52] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.10.

13. Forty-five acupoints allocated to the Leg-Shao-Yang-Gallbladder channel

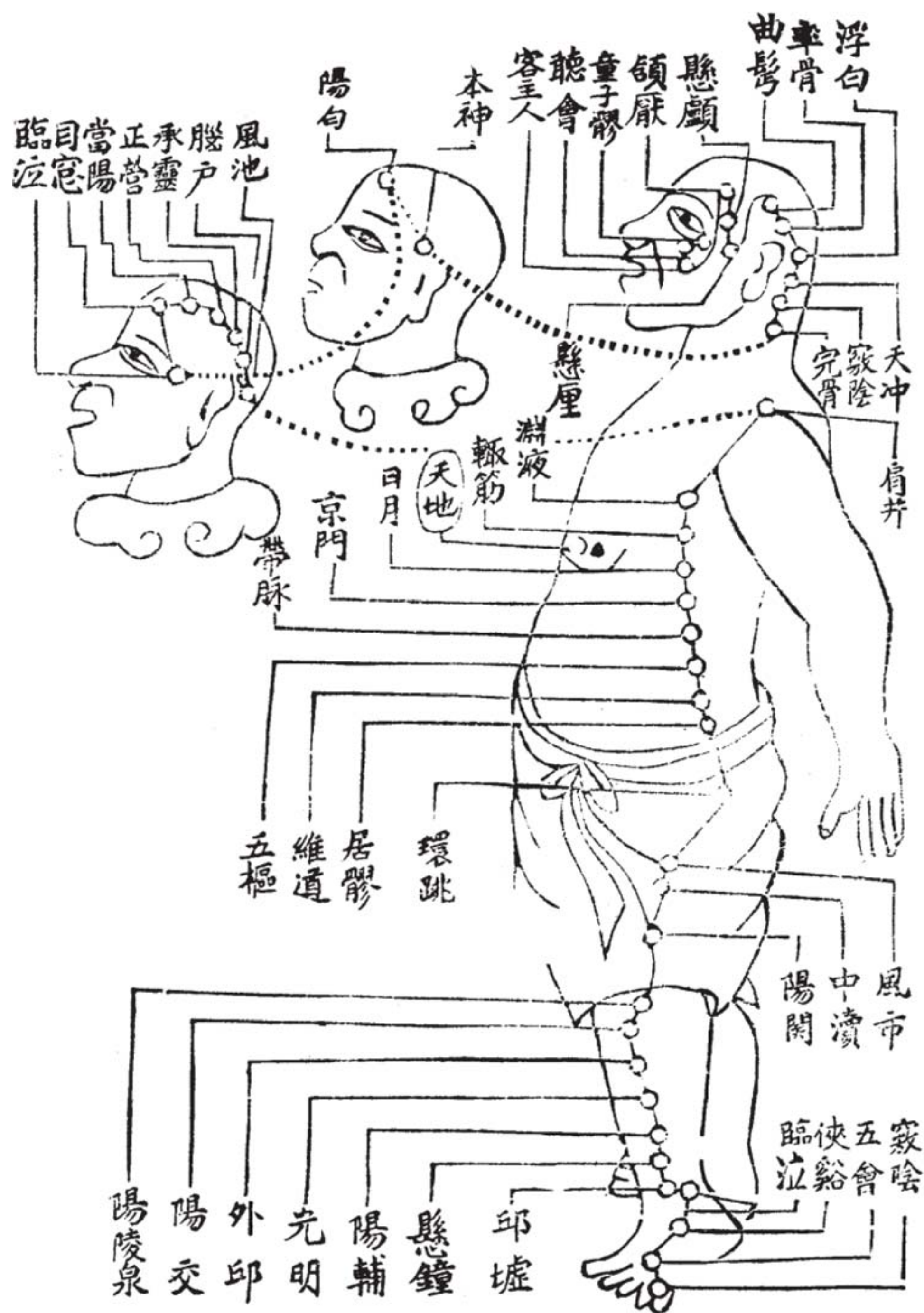


Fig. 0.50.11 Diagram of forty-five acupoints allocated to the Leg-Shao-Yang-Gallbladder channel

The Song[53] reads like this:

Among the 45 acupoints of the Leg-Shao-Yang channel
There are twenty located on the head
Which can be divided into three groups.
Starting from Tong-zi-liao it flows to Feng-chi,
Making a group of a few sequential acupoints.
Tong-zi-liao is placed five fen from the canthus;
Ting-hui you'll find in the cavity in front of the ear.
Ke-zhu-ren is another name for Shang-guan,
Which you can find in front of the ear between the jawbones.
Two acupoints called Han-ya and Lu-xin
Are placed in the lower corner of Shang-lian.
Xuan-li is different from this,
Placed in the upper corner of Xia-lian.
Qu-fa is located on the hairline above the ear;
Lü-gu is 1.5 cun above the ear.
Tian-chong sits behind the ear in the area of the hair;
Fu-bai is one cun above the hairline.
Qiao-yin is located on the occipital bone;
Above Wan-gu there is an empty area
Where it is placed four fen above the hairline behind the ear.
Ben-shen is three cun far from Shen-ting
And one cun above the hairline above the ear.
Yang-bai sits one cun above the eyebrow;
Lin-qi is placed five fen above the hairline.
Dang-yang is one cun above the hairline,
While Mu-chuang is half a cun above the hairline.
Zheng-ying sites 2.5 cun above the hairline;
Cheng-ling is two cun above the hairline.
There is Feng-chi located 5.5 cun deep in the hair,
Which you can find in the cavity behind the ear.
Jian-jing sits in the cavity at the end of shoulder,

[53] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.11.

1.5 cun in front of the large bone.
Yuan-ye is three cun below the armpit;
Followed by Zhe-jin five fen below.
Qi-men is allocated to the Liver channel,
Which is 4.5 cun apart from Ju-jue.
Ri-yue you'll find five fen below Qi-men;
Jing-men is placed on the girdle,
As Dai-mai lies 1.8 cun below Zhang-men
While Wu-shu sits 1.8 cun below the Dai-mai channel.
Wei-dao is 5.3 cun below Zhang-men,
While Ju-liao is 8.3 cun below Zhang-men.
Zhang-men is allocated to the Liver channel,
Which is nine cun near Xia-wan.
Huan-tiao is in the hollow of the buttock
To continue the line of the Leg-Shao-Yang.
Feng-shi sits outside the hip,
Where the middle finger touches the thigh;
Zhong-du is placed five cun above the knee.
Yang-guan is three cun above Yang-ling-quan,
While Yang-ling-quan is one cun below knee.
Yang-jiao sits outside seven cun above the ankle;
Wai-qiu is six cun above the ankle.
Five cun above the ankle Guang-ming is placed;
Yang-fu is four cun above it.
Xuan-zhong is three cun, while Qiu-xu is placed
At the bottom of the cavity above the ankle.
The following Xia-xi is 4.5 cun from the ankle
And allocated to the primary acupoint of the Gallbladder channel.
Lin-qi is like Xia-xi and 4.5 cun from the ankle;
Wu-hui is like Qiao-yin, both acupoints mostly the same.

14. Twenty acupoints placed on the head and divided into the three groups in the following sequence:

The 1st Group



Fig. 0.50.12 The first group of acupoints

Inscriptions:

❶ Tong-zi-liao (1);
❷ Ting-hui (2);
❸ Zhu-ren (3);
❹ Han-ya (4);
❺ Xuan-lu (5);
❻ Xuan-li (6);
❼ The seventh number corresponds to Qu-fa;
❽ The following Lü-gu (8);
❾ Tian-chong (9);
❿ Fu-bai (10);
⓫ Qiao-Yin (11);
⓬ Wan-gu (12).

The 2nd Group

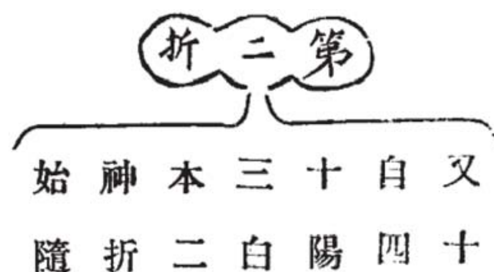


Fig. 0.50.13 The second group of acupoints

Inscriptions:

- Starting from Ben-shen (13) and through to Yang-bai the second group proceeds.

The 3rd Group



Fig. 0.50.14 The third group of acupoints

Inscriptions:

❶ The fifteenth acupoint, Lin-qi, is placed below the eye;

❷ Mu-chuang (16);

❸ Zheng-Ying (17);

❹ Ling-cheng (18);

❺ Nao-hu (19);

❻ Feng-chi (20).

According to this detailed sequence, we learn about the acupoints of the Gallbladder channel placed on the head.

15. Fifteen acupoints allocated to the Leg-Jue-Yin-Liver channel

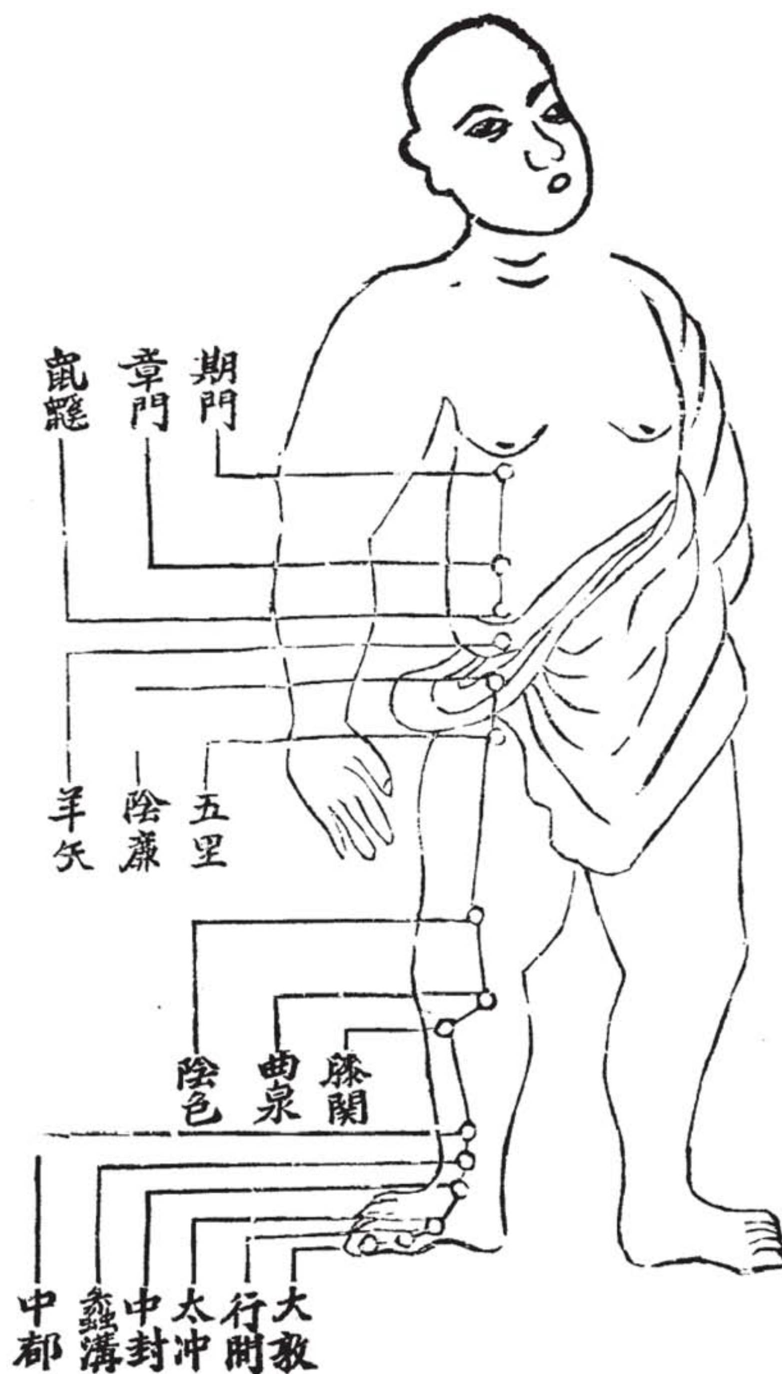


Fig. 0.50.15 Diagram of fifteen acupoints allocated to the Leg-Jue-Yin-Liver channel

The Song[54] reads like this:

The acupoint at the end of big toe is called Da-dun;
Hang-jian is placed at the root of the big toe.
The following Tai-chong is two cun away from the toe;
Zhong-feng sits just one cun before the ankle.
Li-gou is located five cun above the ankle,
While Zhong-dou seven cun;
Xi-guan is two cun below Du-bi while Qu-quan
Sits on the striated muscle under the knee.
Yin-bao sits four cun above the knee-cap;
Wu-li is placed three cun below Qi-chong.
Yin-lian is located two cun below Qi-chong
While Yang-shi is just one cun below it.
Qi-chong is allocated to the Stomach channel
And placed one cun above Shu-xi.
Shu-xi sits at the end of the haunch,
Four cun beside the central channel.
Zhang-men is nine cun beside the central Xia-wan,
Placed on the side where ulnar bone touches the torso.
Qi-men is located four cun and five fen beside Ju-jue
Almost at the same place with the latter on the mainstream.

[54] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.15

p) Twenty-eight acupoints allocated to the Du-mai channel



Fig. 0.50.16 Diagram of twenty-eight acupoints allocated to the Du-mai channel

The Song[55] reads like this:

Yin-jiao of the Du-mai channel sits inside the lip;
Dui-duan is the midpoint at the end of the lower lip.
Shui-gou is located just below the nose,
While Su-liao is at the end of nose.
The northern side of the head is high, the southern is low;
First count the number the acupoints lying above the hairline
Which cover a line of one chi[56] and two cun backward,
Starting from Shen-ting located five fen above the hairline.
Followed in order by Shang-xing located one cun above the hairline;
Two cun from the hairline sits Xin-hui.
Qian-ding is placed 3.5 cun from the hairline
While BAI-HUI *sits at five.*
Hou-ding lies1.5 cun backward from the top,
While Qiang-jian three cun away from Bai-hui.
Nao-hu sits 4.5 cun away from Bai-hui,
But eight cun back you'll find Feng-fu.
As to Ya-men, it is five fen above the back hairline.
From Shen-ting on, there are ten acupoints on the head.
From the upper vertebra and downward
There are twenty-four acupoints along the spine.
Da-chui sits on the top vertebra;
If the following three vertebrae are not counted,
And the last acupoint Zhang-qiang is also not counted,
There are twenty-one vertebrae in total
With the acupoints arranged in sequence:
Da-chui sites on the first vertebra as number one;
The space between the first and second vertebrae are allocated to Tao-dao;
The space between the third and fourth vertebrae are allocated to Shen-zhu;
The fifth vertebra corresponds to Shen-dao indeed.

[55] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.16.
[56] about one foot.

The sixth vertebra is allocated to Ling-tai, the seventh to Zhi-Yang;
The ninth to Jin-shu, the eleventh to Ji-zhong;
The twelth to Xuan-shu; the fourteenth to Ming-men and Shen-shu;
The sixteenth to Yang-guan; the twenty-first to Yao-shu
While Zhang-qiang is allocated to the tailbone.

q) Twenty-four acupoints allocated to the Ren-mai channel

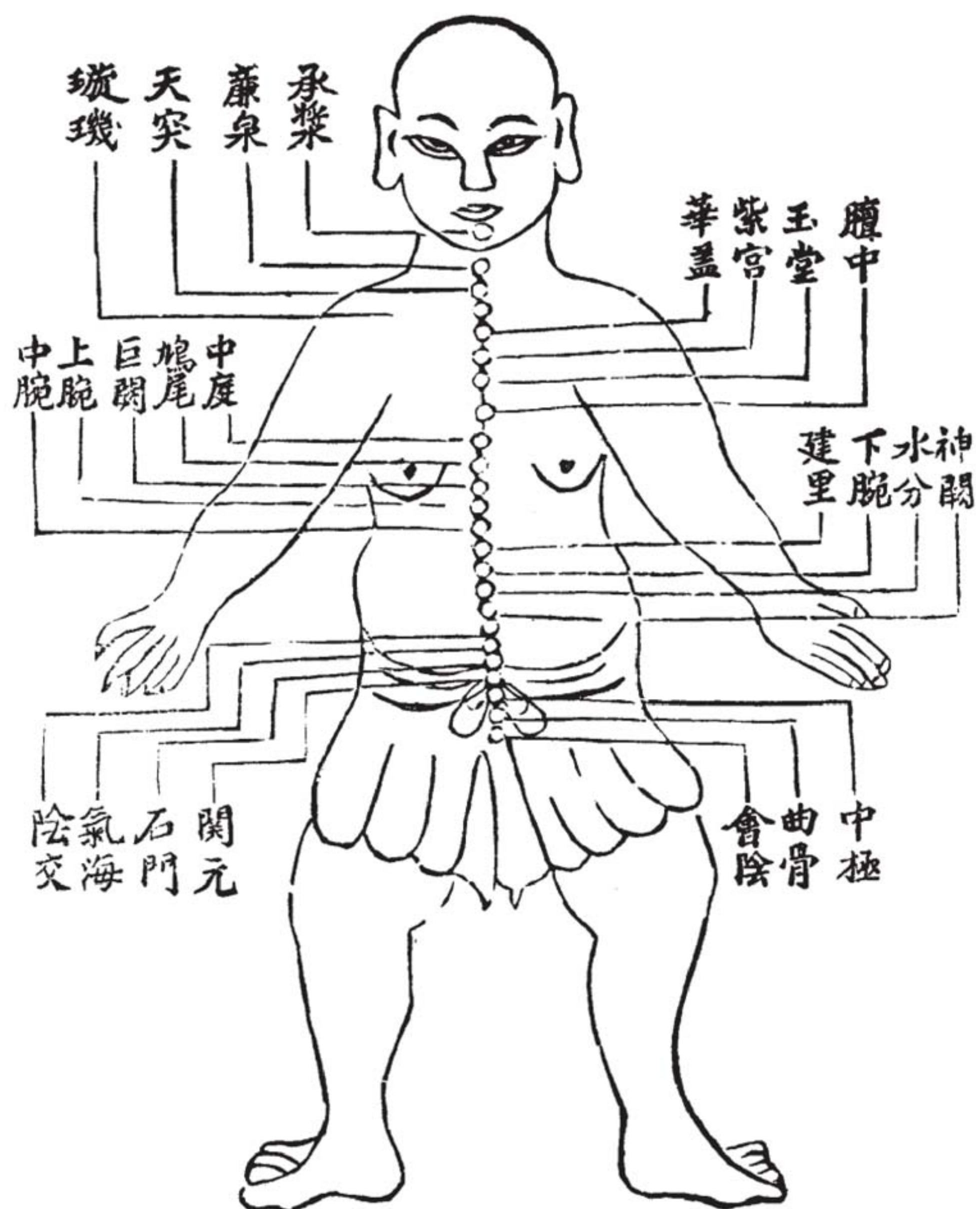


Fig. 0.50.17 Diagram of twenty-four acupoints allocated to the Ren-mai channel

The Song [57] reads like this:

The spring point of the Ren-mai channel called Hui-yin
Is located midway between the genitals and the anus.
Qu-gu is placed in the cavity on the hairline,
While Zhong-ji is four cun below the navel,
Guan-yuan is just three cun.
The acupoint two cun below the navel is called Shi-men;
1.5 cun below the navel you'll find Qi-hai.
Yin-jiao sits one cun below the navel;
Shen-guan is placed just in the center of it.
One cun above the navel you'll see Shui-fen,
But two cun above it Xia-wan;
Three cun above it there is Jian-li,
Four cun, the acupoint called Zhong-wan.
Five cun above the navel there is Shang-wan,
While Ju-jue is located 6 cun and 5 fen above it.
The following Jiu-wei is five fen below the chest;
Zhong-ting is one cun and six fen below Shan-zhong.
Shan-zhong is the midpoint on the line between the nipples,
While Yu-tang rests quite above it.
Zi-gong is two cun and two fen above Shan-zhong;
Hua-gai rises four cun and eight fen above Shan-zhong.
Cheng-jiang is placed on the cheek below the lower lip
This completes the Ren-mai *channel in front of the body.*

r) Eleven acupoints allocated to Chong-mai channel include:

You-men, Tong-gu, Yin-xi, Shi-guan, Shang-qu, Mang-shu;
You-men is a half *cun* aside from the central Ju-jue.
Zhong-zhu, Sui-fu, Bao-men, Yin-guan, Xia-ji;
Zhong-zhu is located below Mang-shu.
The Dai-mai channel around the waist has no acupoints allocated to it.

[57] The Song describes the inscriptions in Fig. 0.50.17.

51 • Diagram of the Eight Assemblies

a) Diagram of the Eight Assemblies in front of the body

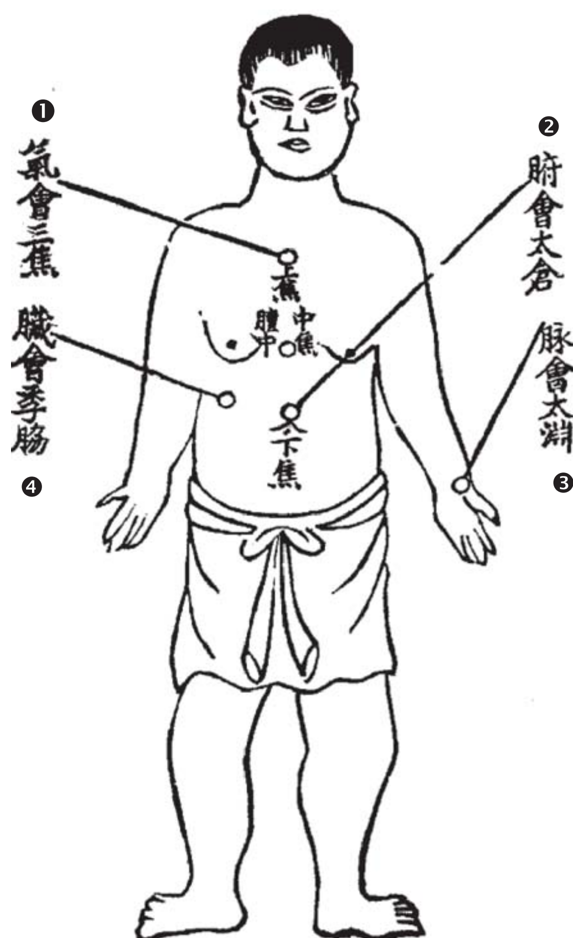


Fig. 0.51.1 Diagram of the Eight Assemblies in front of the body

Inscriptions:

- ❶ *Qi* energy assembly of the Triple Warmer: the Upper Warmer;
- ❷ Fu-organs assembly at Tai-cang: the Lower Warmer;
- ❸ Mai-pulse assembly at the Tai-yuan acupoint;
- ❹ Zang-organs assembly at Ji-xie.

b) Diagram of the Eight Assemblies at the back of the body



Fig. 0.51.2 Diagram of the Eight Assemblies at the back of the body

Inscriptions:

❶ *Xue* (blood) assembly at the Da-shu acupoint;

❷ *Gu* (bones) assembly at the Da-shu acupoint: the first vertebra;

❸ *Jin* (tendons) assembly at the Ling-quan acupoint;

❹ *Sui* (marrow) assembly at Jue-gu.

52 • Diagram of the Seven Chong-Men or painful acupoints

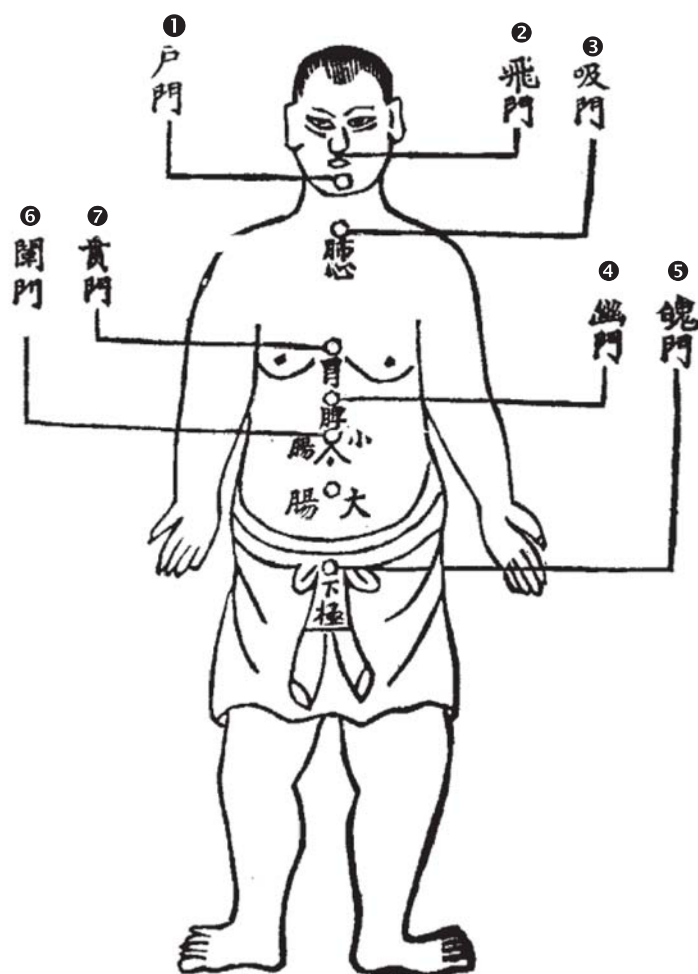


Fig. 0.52.1 Diagram of the Seven Chong-Men or painful acupoints

Inscriptions:

- ❶ Hu-men;
- ❷ Fei-men;
- ❸ Xi-men: lungs/heart;
- ❹ You-men: spleen;
- ❺ Hun-men: *Xia-ji* or the lower extremity;
- ❻ Chan-men: small intestine; large intestine (below);
- ❼ Guan-men: stomach.

53 ✦ Treatise on Wei-qi or Defensive Energy

Wei-qi or Defensive Energy is described in the Chapter 'Ling-shu' as follows:

> *"Wei-qi circulates day and night to make fifty cycles all around the body. Twenty-five circulations are made in the course of the day while the other twenty-five are made at night."*

When *yin* culminates at daybreak, *yang qi* issues forth starting from the eyes. After the eyes open, it rises to the top of the head and then flows along the following channels:

- the Leg Tai-yang channel of bladder;
- the Hand Tai-yang channel of the small intestine;
- the Leg Shao-yang channel of the liver;
- the Hand Shao-yang channel of the Triple Warmer;
- the Leg Yang-ming channel of the stomach;
- and the Hand Yang-ming channel of the large intestine.

It takes one day to complete this circle which occurs mostly on the external surfaces of the body.

Night circulation of *qi* flows along the following path:

- the Leg Shao-yin channel of the kidneys;
- the Hand Shao-yin channel of the heart;
- the Hand Tai-yang channel of the lungs;
- the Leg Jue-yin channel of the liver;
- the Leg Tai-yin channel of the spleen.

Yang qi moves twenty-five cycles around the body to culminate finally in the so-called 'daybreak energy of a human being' issued in the eyes, which then moves upward to the top of the head.

Boxing practice requires every posture to be performed by moving (*dong*) *yang qi* through the whole body until a state of stillness (*jing*) is attained. Once the whole body is infused with this stillness, the mind (*xin*) is able to generate thoughts in harmony with this state and launch the body movements all over again. So when active or *yang qi* is dominant in the body, the mind needs to start generating thoughts of stillness. When passive or *yin qi* dominates the the whole body body daily for twelve hours, the key points of the human spirit (*shen*) can be attained, enabling one to inflict lethal attacks or serious injuries to the opponent.

As a song goes:

> Watch *Zi* (11 pm-1 am) is allocated to the ankles;
> *Chou* (1-3 am) to the waist;
> *Yin* (3-5 am) to the eyes;
> *Mao* (5-7 am) to the face;
> *Chen* (7-9 am) and Si (9-11 am) to the position of the arms;
> *Wu* (11 am-1 pm) to the chest;
> Wei (1-3 pm) to the belly;
> *Shen* (3-5 pm) to the heart;
> *You* (5-7 pm) to the back;
> *Xu* (7-9 pm) and *Hai* (9-11 pm) to the thighs.

And

> Watch *Zi* (11pm-1 am) is allocated to the ankles;
> *Chou* (1-3 am) to the crown of the head;
> *Yin* (3-5 am) to the area of the ears;
> *Mao* (5-7 am) to the face;
> *Chen* (7-9 am) and *Si* (9-11 am) to the upper chest, the area between the nipples;
> *Wu* (11 am-1 pm) to the ribs;
> *Wei* (1-3 pm) and Shen (3-5 pm) to the heart;
> *You* (5-7 pm) to the knees;
> *Xu* (7-9 pm) to the waist;
> *Hai* (9-11 pm) to the thighs.

54 • A song on the diagram of Zang and Fu organs according to the Earthly Branches

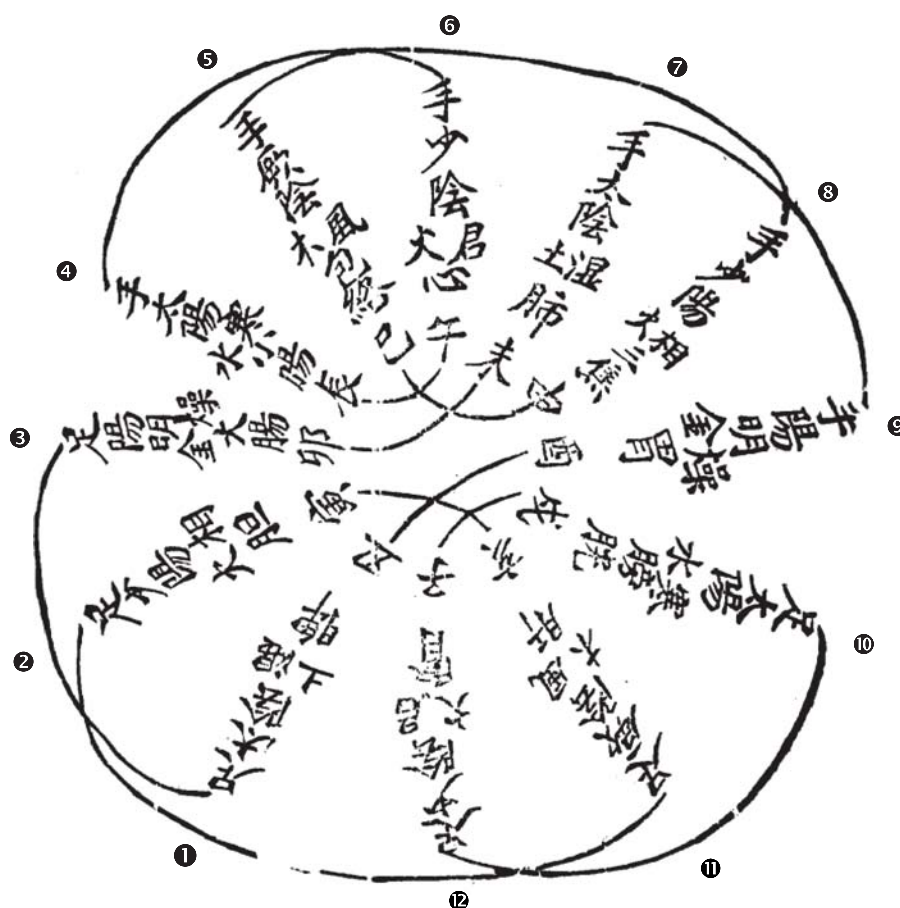


Fig. 0.54.1 Diagram of Zang and Fu organs according to the Earthly Branches

Inscriptions:

❶ Leg – Shao-Yin – kidneys: fire, ruler; watch *Zi;*

❷ Leg – Tai-yin – spleen: earth, wet; watch *Chou;*

❸ Leg – Shao-yang – gallbladder: fire, mutuality; watch *Yin;*

❹ Hand – Yang-ming – large intestine: metal, dry; watch *Mao;*

❺ Hand – Tai-yang – small intestine: water, cold; watch *Chen;*

❻ Hand – Jue-yin – pericardium: wood, wind; watch *Si;*

❼ Hand – Shao-yin – heart: fire, ruler; watch *Wu;*

8. Hand – Tai-yin – lung: earth, wet, watch *Wei;*
9. Hand – Shao-yang – Triple Warmer: fire, mutuality, watch *Shen;*
10. Leg – Yang-ming – stomach: metal, dry, watch *You;*
11. Leg – Tai-yang – bladder: water, cold, watch *Xu;*
12. Leg – Jue-yin – liver: wood, wind, watch *Hai.*

Song of the arrangement of Zang and Fu organs according to the Earthly Branches

The *Zi* watch is allocated to the channel of kidneys
While Wu to the Shao-yin channel of the heart, the symbol of the ruler.

The *Chou* watch is associated with the spleen
While *Wei* with the Tai-yin channel of lung, the symbol of the root.

The *Yin* watch corresponds to the gallbladder
While *Shen* to the Shao-yang channel of the Triple Warmer, the symbol of the pivot.

The *Mao* watch correlates with the large intestine
While *You* with the Yang-ming channel of the stomach, the symbol of distribution.

The *Chen* watch is allocated to the small intestine
While *Xu* to the Tai-yang channel of the bladder, the symbol of the origin.

The *Si* watch is associated with the pericardium
While *Hai* with the Jue-yin channel of the liver, the symbol of the end.

The five Zang organs connect with the *qi* of the six Fu organs to manage transformations.

In martial arts one can obtain this through getting into the spirit.

55 • A song on the diagram of the six sorts of Qi energy according to the yearly cycle

1. *Diagram of the six phases of qi energy according to the yearly cycle*



Fig. 0.55.1 Diagram of the six phases of qi energy according to the yearly cycle

Inscriptions:

❶ The hand/leg Tai-yang channels of the small intestine and bladder, the symbols of water and cold;

❷ The hand/leg Jue-yin channels of the pericardium and bladder, the symbols of wood and wind;

❸ The hand/leg Shao-yin channels of the heart and kidneys, the symbols of fire and ruler;

❹ The hand/leg Tai-yin channels of the lungs and spleen, the symbols of earth and wet;

❺ The hand/leg Shao-yang channels of the Triple Warmer and gall-bladder, the symbols of fire and mutuality;

❻ The hand/leg Yang-ming channels of the large intestine and stomach, the symbols of metal and dry.

2. A song on the diagram of the six phases of qi energy according to the yearly cycle

The Jue-yin channel, the symbol of wind and wood, manages the beginning of spring;

The second portion of *qi* is allocated to the Shao-yang channel, the symbol of fire and ruler.

The third phase of *qi* deals with the heavenly Tai-yin channel, the symbol of earth;

The fourth period of *qi* is correlated with fire, while the fifth one with metal.

Destruction of internal and creation of external models in dry and metal style;

The sixth phase of *qi* is placed in the source, the symbol of the end, of storing and of true things.

56 • Song of Yin-Yang correlation of the Zang and Fu organs

The Tai-yang channel of small intestine goes with the leg channel of the bladder;

The Yang-ming channel of the large intestine goes with the leg channel of the stomach.

The Shao-yang channel of the Triple Warmer goes with the leg channel of the gallbladder;

The Jue-yin channel of the pericardium goes with the leg channel of the liver.

The Shao-yin channel of the heart goes with the leg channel of the kidneys;

The hand Tai-yin channel of the lungs goes with the leg channel of the spleen.

57 • Song of outside and inside manifestation of the Zang and Fu organs

The heart and small intestine, lungs and large intestine;
The pericardium, Triple Warmer, leg channel of the bladder;
The spleen and stomach, liver and gallbladder —
The outside and inside manifestations of the Zang and Fu organs
Are distinguished according to the *yin* and *yang* substances.

58 • Song of blood circulation according to the twelve watches

The *Yin* watch is allocated to the hand – Tai-yin channel of the lungs running to the hand
While Mao to the hand – Yang-ming channel runs to Tai-yin;

The *Chen* watch is associated with the leg – Yang-ming channel of the stomach running to the Zang organs
While *Si* with the leg – Tai-yin channel of the spleen runs to the hand.

The *Wu* watch is correlated with the hand – Shao-yin channel of the heart to become *yang*
While *Wei* with the hand – Tai-yang channel of the small intestine runs to the hand;

The *Shen* watch is allocated to the leg – Tai-yang channel of the bladder running to the head
While *You* to the leg – Shao-yin channel of kidneys runs to the leg.

The *Xu* watch is associated with the hand – Jue-yin channel of the pericardium to become *yin*
While *Hai* with the hand – Shao-yang channel of the triple warmer runs to the leg;

The *Zi* watch is correlated with the leg – Shao-yang channel of the gallbladder running to the Fu organs,
While *Chou* with the leg – Jue-yin channel of the liver becomes *yang* running to the head and then to the legs.

59 • Chart of blood circulation according to the twelve watches

The hand – Tai-yin channel of the lungs (with 11 acupoints) flows to

The hand – Yang-ming channel of the large intestine (with 20 acupoints), which flows to

The leg – Yang-ming channel of the stomach (with 25 acupoints), which flows to

The leg – Tai-yin channel of the spleen (22 acupoints), which flows to

The hand – Shao-yin channel of the heart (9 acupoints), which flows to

The hand – Tai-yang channel of the small intestine (19 acupoints), which flows to

The leg – Tai-yang channel of the bladder (63 acupoints), which flows to

The leg – Shao-yin channel of the kidneys (27 acupoints), which flows to

The hand – Jue-yin channel of the pericardium (9 acupoints), which flows to

The hand – Shao-yang channel of the triple warmer (24 acupoints), which flows to

The leg – Shao-yang channel of the gallbladder (44 acupoints), which flows to

The leg – Jue-yin channel of the liver (15 acupoints), which flows again to

The hand – Tai-yin channel of the lungs.

The Chong-mai channel has 11 acupoints
While the Ren-mai channel has 24;

The Du-mai channel has 28 acupoints
While the Dai-mai around the waist has none.

There are three *yang* channels on the hands to transmit yang;
There are also three *yang* channels on the legs to lift up the *yang* substance.

There are three *yin* channels on the hands to transmit the *yin* substance;
There are three *yin* channels on the legs as well to lift up *yin*.

The twelve principal channels plus the other three miraculous channels, Chong-mai, Ren-mai and Du-mai, contain a total of three hundred and fifty-one acupoints, which correlate approximately with three hundred and sixty degrees of a circle.

60 • Treatise on the Central Miraculous Channels Ren-mai and Du-mai

The Ren-mai channel springs from the *Hui-yin*, the acupoint located midway between the genitals and the anus, and flows upwards along the torso to end at acupoints Tian-tu and Lian-quan on the throat.

The Du-mai channel also springs from Hui-yin and flows back and upwards to Zhang-qiang on the tailbone, then continues flowing in the reverse rotation (*ni*) along the spine (*shun*) up to Bai-hui at the top of the head, then continues flowing downward until acupoint Ren-zhong.

The human body has two Central Miraculous Channels, Ren-mai and Du-mai, which flow along the front and back of the body, and are represented in the system of heavenly and earthly numbers by Zi (1) and

Wu (7). When we talk about the Ren-mai and Du-mai channels in terms of their correlation with heaven and earth, we refer to their positions in the south and north respectively. Thus both may be treated separately or jointly. When treated separately, we see that *yin* and *yang* cannot leave each other; if jointly, we see the chaos compounded by the two channels though the both make Oneness. Hence a person can protect the body and keep it healthy through moving *qi* along the Ren-mai and Du-mai channels.

Applying this to a broader perspective, a person is able to understand how true patriots can defend the country by keeping it in healthy condition, not letting it collapse. Those who practice *Dao-yin* breathing techniques (developed by ancient Daoists to prolong life and achieve immortality) in combination with diligent boxing practice are able to restore and control the flowing of *qi* and blood, exhale and inhale properly, purify improper thoughts, discharge chaotic and muddy energy and so on. In order to carry out all these things the practitioner needs to lay the groundwork for closing of visualization and aural opening, cherishing light through silent meditation, slow deep breathing, cultivating morality and integrity, giving attention to profound things and mysteries over a long period in order to understand spontaneously why fire comes out from water, flowers grow in snow, kidneys are like hot soup, the bladder is similar to a cooking pot, true *qi* is issued from the feet and flows throughout the whole body, the Ren-mai and Du-mai channels are like a cartwheel, the four extremities are similar to a stone falling in deep mountains, the absence of thought generates progress and development, and the mechanism of nature works spontaneously by itself and so forth. Each posture must be performed smoothly and lightly, while movements are so quiet there is no difference between motion and non-motion, and the juncture between motions flow on the divide between quiet and activity.

In meditation, we practice *qi* control by using volition without moving the body. However, if meditation and movement are combined in correct proportions, like in *Taijiquan*, *qi* control becomes much easier as we realize that water and fire can co-exist quite naturally. After being in harmony for

a long period, water and fire interact with each other in ascending and descending, resembling a water-lily which sinks into water for a night or wild rice which ripens in the frozen dew to drop their yellow husks.

Similarly, those who cast lead and seek mercury to combine the two alchemically in correct proportions possess a great secret. To the end, the *Taijiquan* practitioner must be wholly intent on not dispersing her *gong-fu*, striving always for unceasing practice. If practice is irregular and one's *gong-fu* becomes dissipated, and the pill (*dan*) of skills cannot mature to the next stage. In former times the great master Zi-yang stated:

> *"The true mercury procreates at Li (fire), but its application lies in Kan (water). Passing through the Southern Garden, a young beauty holds a jade branch of the olive tree in her hand. This is what I mean."*

Intensive unremitting practice over time will help you realize the true meaning of a cut[58], even if only for a short while. According to the universal law, a moment of purification and refinement is just a moment, while an hour is an hour, a day is a day, and a year is still a year. According to the universal law, a lifetime of purification and refinement is a lifetime. After ten years of intensive practice, known as 'purification and refining', the whole body reverts to its original 'undefined' state, full of emptiness and pure spirituality, in which one even starts to question if the body belongs to oneself or not. When my body becomes wholly integrated with my Self, I am unaware that *shen* (spirit) comes out from *qi*, though *shen* is required for *qi* to be formed.

Once you are in the center of the circle, all thought of differences between the round and the square, compasses or set square may be set aside from your mind whilst you carry out your job precisely and painlessly. This is what I mean when I talk about 'taking one's place in the center'. Water does not claim but creates; fire does not claim but projects. Empty space allows us to discriminate between white and black; earth gives birth to metal

[58] A striking technique.

without consciousness. That is why these processes occur so smoothly and naturally. Likewise the Ren-mai channel is not aware it works for Du-mai, while Du-mai works blissfully unaware of Ren-mai. Hence *Zhong-qi* or the Centralized Intrinsic Energy works naturally by itself.

Time provides the best structure for organizing things according to their nature and state at any specific moment. In the sense, the ascent and descent of Ren-mai and Du-mai, and the direct and reverse rotation of *Zhong-qi* back and forth allow intrinsic energy to accumulate effectively in the kidneys to produce stillness. The end result of *Zheng-qi* is in the kidneys — a truly refined energy produced though inhalation and exhalation, coming and going, entering and exiting. That is the whole idea.

Another name for the Zhong-ji acupoint is Qi-yuan[59], located one cun below Guan-yuan or four *cun* below the navel. The bladder channel rises with the other three *yin* leg channels to come together with Ren-mai at the Qi-hai acupoint[60]. One *cun* below Mang-qi[61] is the area where a person's ocean of *qi* is created. This area is also known as '*qi* returns to Dan-tian.' Though there is much written on this matter, it is better to simply purify one's mind and reduce one's desire through the cultivation of *Yuan-qi* (Primordial and Intrinsic Energy), with the aim of unveiling one's true nature and making the body healthier, the spirit stronger. Practicing *Taijiquan* helps you succeed in the true Way of humanity.

[59] Translates literally as 'origin of *qi*'.
[60] Also known as Bo-yang or navel.
[61] Another name for navel.

61 • Song of the main acupoints and their sites

Hou-ding sits one *cun* behind Bai-hui;
Feng-fu is one *cun* above the hairline on the nape;
Tou-wei is located on the frontal eminence above the hairline
One *cun* and five *fen* aside from Ben-shen.
Ting-gong is placed in the ear, large as a red bean –
To strike it out makes a person deaf.
Nao-kong sits one *cun* behind Ling-cheng;
Shui-gou is the midpoint between the nose and upper lip.

Sin-shu (heart) – two parallel acupoints two *cun* aside from the fifth vertebra;

Gan-shu (liver) – two parallel acupoints two *cun* aside from the ninth vertebra;

Dan-shu (gallbladder) – two parallel acupoints two *cun* aside from the tenth vertebra;

Pi-shu (spleen) – two parallel acupoints two *cun* aside from the eleventh vertebra;

Wei-shu (*stomach*) – two parallel acupoints two *cun* aside from the twelfth vertebra;

San-jiao (triple warmer) – two parallel acupoints two *cun* aside from the thirteenth vertebra;

Shen-shu (*kidneys*) – two parallel acupoints two *cun* aside from the fourteenth vertebra;

Pang-guang (*bladder*) – two parallel acupoints two *cun* aside from the nineteenth vertebra;

Yao-shu (waist) – under the twenty-first vertebra and three *chi* away from Da-chui;
Zhang-qiang – three *fen* under the tailbone.

The above-mentioned acupoints are allocated to the Du-mai channel.

Ru-gen – one *cun* and six *fen* below he nipple.
Qi-men – 1.5 *cun* aside from the nipple.
Zhang-men – a parallel acupoint six *cun* above the navel and two *cun* below the nipple,
And six *cun* aside from the mainstream.
Shan-zhong is the midpoint on the line between the nipples;
Qi-hai sits 1.5 *cun* below the navel.
Shi-men is two *cun* below the navel;
Guan-yuan sits three *cun* below it.
Zhong-ji is one *cun* below Guan-yuan;
Hui-yin is located midway between the genitals and anus.

The above-mentioned acupoints are allocated to Ren-mai.

Tai-yang is placed near Ri-yue, the destruction of which can be fatal to the brain.

Fen-shui sits below Kun-men, in the area charged with separating food and drink transmissions. Destruction of this acupoint causes obstruction of food and drink, resulting in death the following day.

Gan-men correlates with these two acupoints.

Er-men corresponds to the ears, which if even slightly damaged can cause loss of consciousness and fainting, whilst a strong hit can be fatal.

Dou-men is located in the area of the nipples; its destruction stops inhalation and though extremely painful, is non-fatal.

Fei-men may be stimulated by slight impact and any serious injury may be fatal.

Yu-guan is at the back of head, and its destruction can cause death within three days.

Fei-di is located in the middle of the back, behind the heart area in front. Its destruction extensive coughing, hematemesis and death in the course of three years.

Shen-jing is placed at the left and right side of the back and its destruction causes laughter and death;
Kun-men is situationed on the larynx and its destruction results in death within an hour or so.

Ming-men is located on the spine between the two kidneys;
Xin-xue (heart) is located in the center of the breastbone and its destruction results in death.

Shang-hai sits below the ulna in the area of hair-growth and its destruction is fatal.

Xia-hai is found in the cavity in the flesh of the arm and its destruction causes it to turn yellow, resulting in fatality in a day or so.

Qian-qi-yan is located below the waist and its destruction will not cause death but much misery;
Hou-qi-yan sits between Fei-shu and Qian-qi-yan.

When attacking an opponent, you need to know the location of her acupoints or unintentional injury may result. For instance, if you strike the Shan-zhong acumpoint with the base of your palm, it will rapidly increase heart *qi* and blood accumulation, resulting immediately in fainting and coma which could be fatal. Therefore in Zhen-jiu[62] therapy, the circuits of the Ren-mai channel in front and the Du-mai channel at the back of the body are studied with great care. It is essential to know the sites and significance of all the acupoints allocated to both Central Miraculous Channels.

As the song goes:

> *The body resembles a bow:*
> *Internal strength is like a string*
> *While acupoints are like vulnerable targets;*
> *The hand is like an arrow waiting to be shot at the right time –*
> *You must be sure in fixing your aim*
> *And never miss the proper sites of the acupoints.*

[62] Acupuncture and moxibustion.

Taiji consists of the Two Forms (*Liang-yi*) represented by heaven and earth, *yin* and *yang*, closing and opening, motion and stillness, soft and solid, weak and strong, folding and stretching, coming and going, advance and retreat, existence and non-existence, inhalation and exhalation, the changed and unchanged, empty and full, the visible and invisible, the healthy and unhealthy, the successes and failures.

Being concerned with the details of all terms and conditions regarding tension and relaxation, the relationship between vertical and horizontal, changes, transformations and so forth, *Taiji* practioners should know that to contract one must first expand, to cast down one must first raise, to seize one must first release. To develop in a way that is wholly integrated, one must seek first to stretch and expand, for only then can tightening and accumulating follow.

Do not become over-reliant on others and never give up. Focus on accumulating strength, refining it into good quality energy which you can use to fill your existence to the brim. To accomplish this, you must first realize the way of fullness and emptiness through the visible forms of entering and leaving, and obtain spirit by transforming knowledge into wisdom, storing this internally by using the doctrine of Guest and Host, which illuminates the course of the Golden Mean, the way of true rulers. The way of the true ruler is one in which authority and responsibility find a balance between full and empty, short and long. It is reflected in the the way of the Divine Dragon, who, while coiling this way and that in unceasing transformation, takes measure of action and inaction, motion and stillness, pros and cons, and acts without fear nor emotion, not discriminating between muscles and skin, bones and tendons, before and after, back and forth, left and right, up and down, above and below. Instead, the Dragon remains exactly in the center of the four cardinal directions, turning around lightly and with agility, attacking upward while defending downward, not fast nor slow but making emptiness significant and completely real.

This is indeed how *qi* is arranged in *Taijiquan*. When escaping, move smoothly with the natural flow using wide movements and allow purified energy to flow in abundance and unimpeded. You will find advantages in this and a good balance between direct and reverse rotations. To grasp these invaluable techniques which are immeasurable in time and space, tame and adopt them for yourself, absorbing them internally like a precious formula, an most secret treasure.

'Move upward but strike downward' — an incontrovertible principle which must be adhered to. Listen to the east but attack to the west; look right but control the left; generate internal power but manifest it externally in gentleness. If there is an up, there must be a down; when advancing, take withdrawal into account; when striking left, be aware of the right. Movements upward must also have simultaneous downward intent. Alternating the two forces of push-pull severs the opponent's root, leading to his quick and certain defeat. Insubstantial and empty *yin* must be clearly differentiated from substantial and solid *yang*. Wherever there is insubstantiality, there must be substantiality — indeed all places have both. Each phenomenon has its empty and full sides. The whole body must be connected through every joint without the slightest rupture. Cold is followed by heat and who can say when great antiquity turned into modernity? The only principle to follow is to obey to the order of the complete cycle, in which above and below are in balance cannot be explained by mere words.

Only when the entire routine is set in order and arranged in proper sequence can one gradually enter true Thusness[63] to discover the outermost limits of suffering and challenges one is able to overcome. By transcending the impure and mundane, one becomes able to act fast and with agility, twisting and turning beyond visible forms, attaining a quality that resembles the full moon in its perfect roundness. Practicing *Taijiquan* is absolutely the same: a small circle is limited by its boundary until one day it turns into the size of a full moon, forcing foes and opponents — all that is unreal — out of its infinite boundary. Hardship may return, however, if

[63] Reality.

proper positioning is lost despite adherence to the principles of circulation. How can one defend against such faults and misfortunes?

My limits are not lower nor higher than the doctrine of Nine Compromises. The sheep's intestine, like a narrow winding trail, cannot be short nor insignificant, so leave it alone and let it go by itself. When men stand up, I immediately fall down, avoiding conflicts and quarrels which generally tend toward escalation rather than resolution. When the majority dictates to the minority, I rely on techniques to prevail over my opponents, avoid ways that lead others to lose their courage and bravery. I prefer to stick closely (*nian*) to my opponent, following all her movements by concentrating my spirit and mobilizing my pre-birth essence (*jing*) into my emptiness (*xu*) and agility (*ling*), both of which overflow and fill my entire body, enabling me to imitate all movements and styles, pretending to follow all the opponent's forms and postures so to change the rhythm and direction of the her motion.

To change postures and dominate over the opponent's position — is it difficult to realize the emptiness within the fullness? Though we already know that fullness lies within emptiness, what is the mechanism which does not block nor support, limit nor extend, soften nor solidify, escape nor get involved? It may happen suddenly, like a person ignorant of his true nature feeling a great surge of intrinsic force sweeping everything upside down like a terrible but graceful windstorm. It is difficult to describe such things. The power one has in his hand must be light yet undeflected. At the same time, one's heavy quality must possess true weight, like a tiger descending a mountain with penetrating eyes, crouching and ever-ready to attack. During one's coming and going one must listen to Thusness and be able discern at a glance the opponent's spiritual condition, her exact position, and all her posture's shortcomings. If the smallest gap exists which you can penetrate, you must use this opportunity to break through the the opponent's defense, for it may not occur again.

This is not easy to grasp initially. To attain true agility means to be commander-in-chief of the entire army[64], and to be in full control of its conduct and maneuverings. Guidance and commands notwithstanding, what is obscure will remain obscure and what is defined will be defined. People are free to make their own choices, to turn upside down or stand firm, to lie down or sit up straight, to move forward or backward, to face up or down, to stand upright or bent; to turn sideways or around. Making a thousand changes, it is difficult to determine the conditions of *qi* while it flows spontaneously through opening and closing, fullness and emptiness. Hence the Boxing Classics state that when one uses energy in an uncontrolled and unconscious manner during the course of a day, one may suddenly recognize that this is not the path of Truth leading to spiritual development, but rather the path leading to certain chaos and confusion with no hope of self-mastery. Voidness, like the spirits and gods, can also help you to distinguish between emptiness and fullness. So how can I know in my heart which side should I take carefully?

[64] 'Army' refers to the body.

Zhong-qi, the centralized and properly balanced *yuan-qi* (primordial or ancestral energy) passes through the feet a hundred of times to accumulate *yang-qi* (nutritive energy), enabling one's body to be in constant readiness for combat. A practioner's attitude, however, should always tend towards avoiding conflict. Before you advance, activate movement out of your internal state of quietness by the simplest and most undetectable way.

Layer by layer build up a solid fort of defense, hoisting a flag of courage. At the same time, prevent imminent attack by raiding the opponent's camp near your fort to exhaust their forces and take further advantage of the cartwheel effect, moving back and forth to attract them into emptiness so as to vanquish them decisively. Using this technique, you can manipulate the opponent's assaults to your advantage like the wind which penetrates fluidly in all holes and fissures. Maneuvering with the circumstances and tirelessly preventing attacks, move right and left, quickly and roundly, always holding fast to any opportunities to counterattack from any position wherever possible. Your feet should follow the arms, as if your spirit is commander and the four extremities soldiers who move up and down in synchronicity, in direct or reverse rotation to regenerate energy. Keep the torso upright like the sun at high noon, casting no shadow. If your timing and positioning is not correct, the body will disintergrate into disorder and will not move as an integrated fashion. Correct this flaw by adjusting the legs and waist, applying this principle in all directions, upward or downward, advancing or withdrawing, left or right. All movements are driven by your mind/heart's intention and not the external form.

Once you attack, strive to keep your opponent's defenses down, leaving no factor unaccounted for, keeping her entirely surrounded and enclosed, charging forward and cutting her down, like a warrior holding the flag of victory. This is the true embodiment of the *Taiji* motif, whose structure can be summed up in one short phrase, "It is quite difficult to implement the *yin* and *yang* transformation existing in everyone completely, since it

requires all your *gong-fu* and even one tiny falsehood will prevent you from grasping it." As the saying goes, "Missing it by a little will lead you many miles astray." Most people mistakenly give up the near to seek the far. This the practitioner must be careful to avoid.

64 • Some statements on the Taijiquan Classics

From Chaos emerged the original state, where *yin* and *yang* separated from heaven and earth and manifestated in all myriad things. Discerning the qualities of *yin* and *yang* and their interrelatedness, sages cherished the principle of *qi* intrinsic in their dualistic structure. They observed that *qi* was structured to obey universal principles (*li*), reflecting the relationship humans had with the sun. Hence, facing upward humans do not feel shy in front of heaven and heaven never feels ashamed looking down towards humanity.

Existing between heaven and earth, humans master bodily movement by moving their hands in accordance with natural principles, the essence of which is that energy flows according to one's level of *gong-fu* and wisdom. Hence a sage can only be matched with a sage. In short, no aspect of the whole system should be overlooked. Do not fall into the trap which many make, of only focusing on one aspect such as the mastery of *gong-fu* technique, at the cost of a more balanced approach. A practitioner should always value the importance of a wholistic approach as the basis for proper development.

To begin with, one must structure one's approach in terms of *yuan-qi*, then follow (*shun*) it conscientiously without thoughts of giving up or idleness, avoiding blockages and evasion. This demands reliance on one's strength and ability over time. If applied properly, the mechanism of *qi* will conduct energy throughout the body's system, bestowing a wonderful understanding of all myriad things. This is a slow process and cannot be forced. Those who learn without using their *gong-fu* at the initial stages have to bring all their resilience to bear to re-develop their skills gradually so that they can attain the level of wisdom of Confucius. As the saying goes, "Initial difficulties are followed by abundance." This means that one's *gong-fu* must be exercised according to Mencius' advice: "It should be a matter in which you open your mind and make your heart sincere. Do not ignore your duties;

do not rely on the assistance of others. This way, you will be able to restore chaos to order and extend this order to other things, working out a model for your true behavior."

As a result of deeds accomplished by methodical application of the purest *gong-fu* bestowed to you by heaven and revealed internally, the dim and obscure way of the past will transform to brightness and clarity. Dedicated use of this approach will definitely lead to modest maturation of your skills in three years and significant mastery in an additional nine years or so, after which you will be able to 'quit' practice, as boxing becomes your second nature. By this stage, your body will move without consciousness of footwork, your spirit will lead the arms with unerring precision until the end of your days. Take my word for it. One who works persistently will realize all dreams.

65 • Revised statement on the Taijiquan Classics

Heaven and earth represent the great movements of the stars; the sun and moon symbolize the celestial phenomena of lightning; wind and clouds as collections of water; and the yearly cycle of spring, summer, autumn and winter, like the rotation of day and night, represent the perpetual and orderly cycles of nature.

The sages too have their own movement, known as 'the great movement of sages'. In this, they divide the land into districts endowed with wells and fields; they supply the people with provisions for living and schools for learning to cultivate the whole nation; they govern by the proper methods in times of flood and drought, rebellion and insurrection; they provide impartiality and objectivity in legal proceedings.

As for the 'great movement of the human body', it cannot exist without yuan-qi. Yuan-qi moves all the processes in the body and is regarded as the third power between heaven and earth. This primordial *qi* creates all things, and the attainment of this *qi* leads to sagehood. To learn how to be a true human you need to follow the rules mandated by heaven — these are the systematized doctrines of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases. Through these, one can grasp the original way of bodily movement.

The original way of bodily movement emerges from your painstaking work with the muscles, tendons and bones. Conscientious work through opposing states such as 'advance and retreat,' 'existence and non-existence' and other opposite pairs will bring the body to a state of motion and stillness, of opening and closing. Any disordered interaction of body parts will result in uncoordinated movement. When in motion, the whole body should be light and agile, all parts connected together.

The social environment is like an ocean of humanity where emphasis is placed simply on being in good terms with others, and not on self-cultivation within the mundane world. Perception and development of the latter

can only be grasped through self-mastery and control over one's mind/heart. This is known as *gong-fu*.

As for the essence of *Taiji*, it consists of a sudden quiet realization of the way of *qi* circulation and its connection with universal principles. This understanding brings about infinite benefits. I myself have made my essence and spirit strong and healthy within my life span to clear my country of bandits and keep watch at the internal and external borders, using the tradition of clarity and calmness of mind. So how can I be unhappy or discontented? This is the greatest benefit of *Taiji* movement.

Though there may be purposeful movements forward and upward, other movements exist with no visual forms or specific targets, carried out just for the sake of spiritual welfare. Such divine motions arise from the cultivation of *gong-fu* and appear in the form of a sage's conduct. This conduct manifests in varying measures and as different phenomena, corresponding to the virtues of heaven and earth. It occurs at the temporal level in my body but is experienced in my mind at the realm of *Taiji*.

Therefore the *Taiji* of my mind returns to the *Taiji* of *Taiji*[65]. What other purpose can it have but to be *Taiji* for the sake of *Taiji* and nothing else? This is its only and absolutely magnificent role. This is pure spirit, also known as '*Taiji*-in-itself'[66].

(Some of my ill-informed and subjective interpretations at end of this chapter would make a wise man burst into laughter[67]).

[65] That is, 'Taiji-in-itself'.
[66] Alternatively, 'Taiji for the sake of Taiji.'
[67] A traditional self-deprecating aside used by Chen Xin to bring the text into perspective and return the reader to reality.

66 • Regarding the name of Taijiquan

The derivation of the *Taiji* name for this particular style of martial art originated in antiquity and is something practitioners should know. With time the laws of *Taiji* were extended to the entire form, including the principles of up and down, left and right, forward and backward in all the positions of the four limbs. All large-scale turns and movements in this art embody the *Taiji* motif, from which a full list of terms and meanings were derived. These terms correlated with moral laws which were strictly observed. The problems of later generations (arising from irrationality, imprudence, selfishness and arrogance) bear no relation to the concerns of the ancients, who strove only to become experts in the conditions of 'no hard and no soft'. The ancients modeled their lives on the principles of *Taiji* to overcome the obstacles and hardships of life. This is why I think only the divine wisdom of the ancients could have invented the *Taiji* motif.

It would also be better to look toward Fu Xi's figures (Bao Xi), the power of the Empress of the legendary Xia dynasty, the numerology of the Yellow River Chart and the Luo River Writings to gain insight into wisdom. Obviously, any shallow study of the knowledge cannot penetrate the depths of the old writings, added to the fact that the wisdom of the ancients is so fathomless even the explanations of the Yellow River Chart and Luo River Writings are inadequate. Whilst this wisdom is essentially beyond words, the Book of Changes does state that the trigrams and hexagrams created by Fu Xi and the criss-crossing interaction of *yin* and *yang* through the six lines of the hexagrams, do manifest the spirit of the Changes set out in the Appendix to the Book, and also transmit the concept of mutual creation and destruction of elements constituting the Five Phases.

The names of the trigrams and hexagrams, the comments to the yao lines, the mutual creation and destruction of the Five Phases[68] and the nature and reasons for their similarities and differences can all be treated as evi-

[68] Water, fire, wood, metal, earth.

dence of both the profound and superficial conditions indicated by the numbering system. However, the knowledge left by the ancients is so complex that it cannot be distinguished and structured in a way similar to the numbering system of the Chart and Writings, which allow us to create sequences of bigger numbers and complication combinations to explain the intrinsic reasoning and conditions behind different situations and circumstances.

Although there was no need for the explanation of mundane things , the ancients made efforts to describe the origin of *Taiji* clearly, not for the sake of illuminating martial techniques but to work out the all-embracing universal system. This system was named 'quan', that is, the way of cultivation through boxing. The ancients freely and randomly revealed the principle of *Taiji* existing in the essence and vitality of various phenomena and conditions. The names of *Taiji* postures often indicate their application, much as the names of acupoints deepen our understanding of the body. All things correspond to *Taiji*'s applications and all follow it without exception, as if reflecting the same essence.

Though the most subtle and minute principles remain invisible, all situations under heaven return to the primal origin of the Universe, no matter their complexity. This is the wonderful principle of Oneness. Despite tremendous difficulty comprehending the legacy of knowledge from the ancients, later generations accorded them deep authority and respect for revealing the way back to the original source, using unceasing movements of the body, mind, fate and the other human elements. It is said, "Martial skill is the small Way, while *Taiji* is the great Way." From this perspective, dedicated practitioners will sooner or later arrive at a state of expansive movements, the eyes attentively open and the mind calm and tranquil. Deep and conscientious contemplation over a period of time will make boxing practice beneficial for people. How can we take it lightly?

67 • Regarding the origins of Taijiquan

Heaven is the father while earth the mother. It could also be said that *yin* and *yang qi* of *Taiji* accumulated, created and nutured heaven and earth in adherence with the principle of the Three Teachings returning to Oneness. This principle embraces universal phenomena in time and space and all myriad situations. It also most probably established *Taiji* boxing as the essence of all martial arts. The only other principle that could arch over the principle of martial arts is that of the all-embracing *Taiji* motif.

Boxing or quan denotes power. To be powerful means to know what is light and what is heavy. The true source of the universal principle is the *Taiji* motif which informs boxing's applications. The symbol of *Taiji* is encapsulated in the body — the two fists and the body itself with its upper and lower halves. At the same time, the whole body and its distinct parts represent what is known as *Taiji* boxing, but not in the way of techniques and tricks, that is, not in the martial arts. *Taiji* boxing pivots on the single mind. When the mind itself assumes the role of Host, its authority is like the Host's as well. Thus the stillness of mind can have authority, but since the mind is naturally empty, its function is to hold fast to Voidness.

The ruler or Son of Heaven carries out heaven's mission on earth. In terms of bodily movement, this means that the mind is used to govern all parts of the body, taking orders from Nature and engaging in action to foster *yang* reproduction, while cultivating stillness to create *yin* substance. Hence *yin* and *yang* interact, distinguishing action from inaction, motion from stillness, leading to the continuation of *qi* flow. Thus pure and light *qi* rises and impure heavy *qi* sinks down ward. With proper practice, the student will start to experience this at the Bai-hui acupoint on the top of the head, the 'command post' of the whole body. One first has to deal with the pulse and internal pressure, then guide and rotate *qi* flow to activate the hands, rendering them agile yet calm, all the while making sure that *qi* continues to run naturally. Once *qi* flow increases in capacity and constancy, it begins

to fill the whole body from the top of the head[69] to the soles of the feet[70], providing constant nourishment.

This mechanism of *qi* flow can also be compared to the uprightness and Way of Dao, where the streams of justice collect into the large chaotic river of natural qi, which is sometimes light as a poplar blossom, at other times hard as metal and stone or even quick and powerful as a tiger's attack. When moving, it is like a steady stream; when still, it is like a mountain; when advancing, it is like one who knows not retreat. Natural *qi* is like a person for whom principles and laws remain nameless, who is discerning but cares not for detailed analysis, who wraps all six levels[71] into one hexagram to hide it deep in the heart, and whose heart is so great that it has no outside and so small that it has no inside, becoming one with yuan-qi which is regenerated effortlessly at will.

Therefore one's volition (*zhi*) and consciousness (*yi*) determine the development of *qi* and its transformation into spirit (*shen*).

Proceeding through a series of intense transformations, such a person is a true Dragon person whose skills have immeasurable applications. She understands this, cultivate her body from within, deliberately yielding to control the situation and the opponent's position. This technique penetrates her very bones and keeping the opponent safely at arm's length, she waits for the perfect moment to attack. To react promptly and appropriately, one must be very attentive, gathering strength, force and spirit to sustain the long journey through 'the main hall into the inner chamber'[72].

[69] The top of the head corresponds to heaven.
[70] The soles of the feet correspond to earth.
[71] The six lines of a hexagram.
[72] This means 'to invest in the profound scholarship required of an advanced martial arts practitioner'.

A person's mind/heart plays the role of Host, governing all vital processes in the human body. When done properly, this is also called the Way of the Mind or the Managed Mind/Heart. In the course of governing (*li*), the practitioner starts to make *qi* flow, which entails *yin* and *yang* interacting within the framework of the Five Phases. Energy that is unregulated, that is, out of the regulation of this framework, cannot be consciously controlled, so cannot flow properly. Hence, the act of governing and *qi* itself are mutually dependent on each other for their functions. This is called *Wuji*, otherwise known as No Extremes or Ultimate Nothingness, and is the foundation of *Taiji*.

Heaven creates humans according to this principle. This principle dictates that *qi* is born in the mind/heart, which stores sufficient knowledge to realize that the governing of *qi* is held in the mind/heart (*xin*). These concepts lie turbid, obscure and shapeless in the bosom until somehow understanding arises from the mind/heart to develop the concepts externally. Hence what is unborn is part of unformed chaos, the one and indivisible *Wuji*, from whose bosom these principles emerge.

How do we learn about the profound (*wei*)? The answer is simple. The concept of the profound is the governing of *yin* and *yang* existing in its depths and acting in direct rotation (*shun*) in accordance with the natural mechanism of the mind. This structure exists in the human mind/heart as the doctrine of the Golden Mean. To make the body move correctly in all directions, a practitioner should be internally prepared, developing the body's internal structure from an undeveloped stage. One's readiness, however, should be imperceptible to the opponent until the proper time for outward manifestation in the form of an image or figure, which depends on its name. Initially, this name will not come immediately to mind, but with time, it will appear in a certain form known as 'improvement' (*zhuo*) or 'reliable visualization'. Imagine, for example, that someone is kicking you with the right foot, to which you respond by brushing the opponent's knee

and taking a step, then twisting, using your right palm to push the opponent's chest. Meditate on this move and improvement will occur. If you look observe intently enough, you will indeed find practical applications for every *Taiji* posture.

Compared to spiritually orientated visualizations and associations, these applications of the postures are not as poetic as their names suggest. Each improvement involves the five sensitive organs and myriad bodily structures through which the process of direct and natural formation is produced. *Taijiquan* abounds with thousands of visual images, but the only ones that will work are yours. Try not to let the words confuse you — they serve no other purpose than to guide you into the inner structures of *Taiji*.

Thus the *yin* and *yang* substances as well as the Five Phases of *qi* flow create the essence of what is called the 'motion which gives birth to *yang*', while stillness produces *yin*. When both are unified in their root source, the outcome is called '*yin* within *yang* and *yang* within *yin*' — the true essence of *Taijiquan*. Each improvement should reveal some *yang* substance, with *yang* emerging out of *yin*[73]. When *yang* is within *yin*, it is called Ultimate Stagnancy (*tai-zhi*), the phase of disadvantage. This stage can be surmounted when it appears, but never try to avoid it. Your study as a dedicated practitioner will help you progress past this, once you attain the understanding in your mind.

As the sages stated, "This is not necessarily so that he who sets a situation in order can make people be more clever and improved." Learn as much as you can so that you may draw inferences from other cases. At the same time, do not be stubborn or inflexible, or you will not be able to adapt nor create your own true path to nature.

[73] While some yin exists within yang and vice versa.

Seven-character line verses composed in the old style

Verse 1

To conduct such techniques as Ward-off (Peng),
Roll-back (Lu), Press Forward (Ji) and Push Down (Na),
You must indeed take the Truth to heart.
In order to properly perform such skills as Attracting (Yin),
Advancing (Jin), Dropping (Luo) and Avoiding (Kong),
You must progress gradually, step by step.
The whole body follows your opponent –
Your closeness creates his difficulties, through which
You can then manipulate the momentum of a thousand pounds
With a force of four ounces!

Verse 2

Attack towards his throat in his upper body,
And punch his crotch in the lower body;
Strike to the ribs from both sides
And to the heart area in the middle of chest
While kicking the shanks or knees in the lower part.
In order to hit with the palm to the back of the head,
You truly need to capture at Hun-men,
The Doors of the Heavenly Soul.

a) The body

Even though *Taiji* boxing is considered a microcosm of the Absolute Way, one must remember that 'in the small you can notice the great.' Therefore when in combat, do not regard *Taiji* boxing as simply a game. Your body must be upright and positioned in accordance with the original principles. This means that without exception, movements must be internally discerned as correct and upright. Following the highest standards, do not walk lamely, neither leaning forward nor backward, nor falling over under any circumstances. All movement should rely on these principles: the mind moves the hands, the hands lead the elbows, and the elbows determine the motions of the whole body.

Although in the end one's hands lead the body's movement, the body assumes its own position to determine the motion of the hands. Theoretically, it is the body that directs the play of the hands. As for the hand movements, they play as the body moves. When the body moves diagonally, its inclined position contains significant elements of straightness. Additional study of the *yin-yang* and closing-opening concepts is necessary.

The opponent can be perfectly understood if you understand yourself. This is the way to master all opponents. However, if you want to perform round movements and avoid corners your body should be flexible and responsive against unforeseen dangers that may appear suddenly in front of you.

b) The mind/heart

Existing between heaven and earth, Man, with his mind/heart[74], his soul, his five sensitive organs and myriad bodily structures, is respresentative of the human race. Man's mind/heart is the Host of his body, and accord-

[74] The Chinese term for mind/heart is 'xin'.

ing to Zhu Xi, the mind/heart is composed of qi, the psycho-physical substrate of all things which adheres to the principles[75] underlying the cosmos. Once the mind/heart is active, it commands the sensitive organs and the myriad bodily structures. Those organs and structures that do not follow the mind/heart's commands cannot be considered as the properly ruled organs. As Mencius states: "All movements back and forth are out of timing for those who do not yet realize their original source."

She who follows her mind/heart and listens to its orders has high aspirations and the ambitions of a human of good character. You can see what she does and what she is able to potentially do by the spiritual quality of her mind/heart. From the perspective of *Taiji* practice, a spiritiually concentrated mind/heart is reflected by the stable positioning of the feet, slightly bent hands, an upright head and a quiet peaceful gaze. All movements and every single gesture should be concentrated with potentiality, allowing the mind to go forward. Looking at such a posture, it is invisible; listening to it, it is soundless; even tasting it, it leaves no taste. In *Taiji* boxing, the internal force of all motions is beyond manifestation.

We should argue less about what is said in the many teachings of numerous classics and focus more on trying the postures and positions during practice. Most people are unaware that these positions are actually external manifestations of *Taiji* concepts and principles encapsulated in forms and routines. The boxing postures themselves are direct expressions of concentrated consciousness. A routine is actually a series of postures set in a predefined order and cannot be attached to any fixed place. The routine itself is the true outward expression of *qi*, so it follows that the series of forms and postures comprising a routine are a true manifestation of the principles. This means that the concepts of opening and closing, stopping and following cannot be replaced nor changed, since all movements follow a natural sequence determined by Nature. A practioner must develop his postures based on this knowledge.

[75] Li, the natural order or pattern.

If you aim too high or seek to reach the peak from a point too far below, it means you are trying to delve into the deep and profound by shallow means, entering through a path outside the Golden Mean, and relying on your own superficial opinion and selfishness. A better way to enter the boundless levels would be to apply single-minded focus and concentration of essence, persevering through crooked and winding paths to reach the zenith. Though high, remote and difficult to reach, this realm, known as the doctrine of the Golden Mean, always exists in one's mind, lying before one's eyes.

c) Consciousness

Consciousness (*yi*) encompasses the mind/heart. It includes all that has happened or has been developed in one's mind. For instance, an idea to write something could be considered as developing one's consciousness in a certain direction on a particular subject, performed on paper with a brush in the form of words and characters. By expressing one's thoughts externally through words and sentences, we learn also to discern the internal workings of others through their outward manifestations.

The secret of *Taijiquan*, however, lies in the fact that its movements exist not of themselves but are elements in an ancient tapestry of thought and consciousness, combining philosophy, healing and fighting into a single fabric. Thus consciousness or thinking developed in the depths of one's mind/heart can be conveyed by means of the hands as the final expression of an idea. What is called the 'expression of one's mind' is actually the development of one's consciousness, of a way of thinking. If the way of thinking is correct and positive, the expression of it in the position of the hands, and hence the body movements, will also be correct. If the way of one's mind is false and negative, the hand expressions will become uneven and distorted.

In practice terms, this means that if you want to improve sinking (*chen*) for example, that is, to become more stable by emptying the force of the upper

body and moving it down to your legs, it is important that you first move your thoughts down the central line of the body straight to the ground, and imagine that every single move of your body develops from there. Thus using the imagination intentionally to focus the direction of your thoughts can greatly promote the effectiveness of *Taijiquan*. If the mind is calm and quiet, the hands and body movements will become natural and correct. However, if one is impatient, overly eager, confused, stressed, idle or dissolute, these internal conditions will inevitably be expressed externally in the hands.

Restless motion destroys quietness and hence the natural formation of the sensitive organs and bodily structures. This formative process is regulated according to the doctrine of the Golden Mean, and any disturbance to it impacts on the ability of the organs and bodily structures to express the core *Taiji* principle, that is, to exist midway between non-existence and existence. Between these two points there is a frame of additional time during which the body moves away from what is called the 'direct and positive way.' This deflection is a by-product of correctness, so implying that any deflection also includes correctness, that is, proper and positive thinking. As long as this is so, the line of consciousness will continue to flow uninterrupted like a smooth winding silk thread of thought, quite the contrary to the image of a ruler-tyrant who absconds defiantly from his responsibilities relying on a clique of corrupted ministers and subservient vassals.

Consciousness is determined by a way of ruling based on a predefined order or set of principles. This is the way of development, and is also associated with the refinement of *qi*. Pure refined *qi* is as hard and solid as steel hands and may be strong enough to kill a person. Needless to say, all depends on control — this applies to every case under heaven.

Thus by observing the external manifestations of a person's consciousness and armed with a little knowledge, it is possible to ascertain the direction of a person's thoughts. Hence if my thinking can be known, I too can discern what others are thinking.

d) Volition

Volition (*zhi*)[76] is a mental attribute valued by all people. Without volition, nothing can be completed and brought to an end. To have volition is to raise one's life to a level higher than physical need. With willpower you will be able to ascend from one level to the next, from beginning to end, directed by a single-minded focus which ignores all past and superfluous details. You do not indulge in idleness, fully aware of the exigences of creating absolute perfection. One who is resolute and has strong volition will work diligently till the end. If the task is not complete, it is considered a failure. In most cases, however, people tend not to cultivate a strong volition to strive for something difficult to attain.

e) Perseverance and constancy

The Way of heaven and earth is in constancy (*heng*) and nothing more. The sun and the moon always alternate with each other, thus providing constant illumination for all changes to occur through the four seasons. They also nurture the sages and enlighten them on the ways of all transformations under heaven, including the art of creation and completion of all things and situations. With unabating enthusiasm, attentiveness and diligence, one's creation or offspring can only become a reality and be beautiful. The Classics emphasize "the value of study in constancy." Confucius also states, "Those who do not know what constancy means cannot be magicians nor shamens."

Knowing what is needed for the diligent practice of *gong-fu*, it is clear that perseverance and constancy are the two most important qualities required of a serious practitioner. Perseverance is the basis for good *gong-fu* — unremitting perseverance leads to victory, anything else to certain defeat. Despite distinctive attributes, volition and perseverance in combination form an unassailable force for success in any situation. Beginner should

[76] Also translated as 'willpower'.

realize that enlightenment does not happen quickly, but only happens through ceaseless cultivation of *gong-fu* in daily practice over time. It is said that "one day of practice will gain you a day's worth of experience, but a day of non-practice will lose you ten days of experience." So if you practice every day, your rate of progress will increase steadily, but if you stop practicing, your rate of progress will drop rapidly. In other words, if your foundation is not properly built, all your efforts will come to an end sooner or later, by which time it will be too late to blame your master for not alerting you to this. Indeed, there is no-one stopping you from asking yourself, "What is my level of *gong-fu* today?".

f) Coherence and tracing

Since antiquity, sages who wrote classics were well versed in the martial arts. This explains why some parts of their literary works — canons, books and classical writings — were devoted to martial affairs. From the time of Emperor Huang-di through to the Yao and Shun periods, and even up to Tang, Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties, military affairs were widely covered in literature. The skills and techniques of hand-to-hand combat and the art of boxing were, however, not specialized yet.

No-one knows the precise date when the martial arts were formed and defined as a complete written tradition in the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing periods. Although there are some ancient works on the subject, most of them consist of simple pictures lacking in detail, especially regarding principles and rules. While it is generally accepted that the study of texts can lead to improvement of one's *gong-fu*, students are vulnerable to losing their gains through excessive inflexibility in thought and practice, focusing on the hard and solid instead of the soft and empty. This only leads to the blockage of blood and *qi* flow, resulting in the disintegration and obfuscation of one's positions and principles.

One must also use the mind to control the body, shadowing an imaginary foe's movements rather than one's own. Eventually, the body will follow

the mind while the mind itself focusses on following the opponent's movements. Moving in isolation without focus, the body becomes clumsy; responding to another's movements, the body becomes agile. If you stick very closely to your adversary's movements, your hands will be able to take accurate measure of the magnitude and direction of his force, helping you to execute timely advances and retreats. The more time you spend practicing this, the closer your skill will be brought to perfection.

When principles and positions are unclear, base qualities such as arrogance and selfishness take root. As for me, representative of the *Chen* family from Shanxi province Qianwen County, I openly declare that I have mastered the principle, the true gate to the martial arts. This principle and the essence of boxing cannot be learned by the ignorant nor the unintelligent, regardless of existing literature accompanied by illustrations.

High grade *gong-fu* looks deceptively one-dimensional and simple, but in fact, it should not be discussed recklessly without deep reflection. To practice correct technique, beginners must remember that every movement is directed by the mind, that is, one must establish full mental control over every movement: from the way one's hand commences a posture, to the area through which it passes, and up to its final resting place. This is actually an external expression of your internal *qi* or intrinsic force (*jin*) flow, going from your mind/heart, passing through a pre-defined path and sinking into every tiny pore and cavity of your body.

This process of 'smoothening out' the lower body is accompanied by the harmonizing of the upper body, so that the middle body can be permeated. It is as if you bear the upper body in your hands and raise the lower body to allow blood to run through the whole body so that there is no difference between the upper and the lower. This process of re-integration begins in opposing directions to converge into one, like two divergent roads merging to form a main thoroughfare. Likewise, *qi* from every little stream and channel in the body unite to merge into a main flow.

As an example, let's take the posture Holding One Lap Pull on the Robe (*Lan Zha Yi*). Move the right hand rightward to the front from under the left arm, palm down and fingers drawing a small circle, pointing first obliquely downward then turning upward. When passing in front of acupoint Shen-ting[77], rotate the right forearm outward and slowly lower it down, elbows bent. Then move the right arm in a wide semi-circle until the hand stops at shoulder level, the back of the hand facing obliquely upward, fingers pointing up. At the same time, take a wide step up to form a right bow step in the final motion.

When the right hand passes in front of the head, flatten the right sole on the ground to establish firm footing for a stable stance. At the same time, emit intrinsic jin force from the mind/heart and pass it through the right part of the chest, from the right nipple toward acupoints Zhong-fu, Qing-ling, Shao-hai, Ling-dao and Lie-que[78], and then to the channels Shao-chong and Shao-shang[79]. Energy flowing through the arm acupoints runs parallel to the right foot flat on the ground, where the intrinsic force passes through acupoint Young-quan through to Da-dun[80] and Yin-bai[81] located at the end of the big toe. Meanwhile, the intrinsic force stored in the bones emerges to fill up the skin of the upper body, then moves toward the five fingers and the crown of the head. From the top of the head, this force directs the waist energy downwards to Zhang-qiang at the coccyx, then turns over to the crotch.

Following this, lower both hands to the level of the crotch and connect the energies of the knees, crotch, chest and lower abdomen, leaving no part isolated. Bring the whole body under control and protect it from chaos and disorder by uniting *shen* (spirit) and *qi*. Now all spaces between the body parts should be filled with energy in readiness for action. If you need to mobilize your spiritual energy in a certain direction, employ all bodily

[77] Located on the upper forehead.
[78] All these acupoints run in parallel 1.5 cun above the wrist.
[79] The channels of the heart and lungs respectively.
[80] the liver channel.
[81] the spleen channel.

resources toward your aim. Since your body is already completely filled with energy, you will not have to bypass the empty spaces between parts of the body, thereby avoiding unnecessary energy loss in transmission and delivery of energy. Your reactions to external assaults will thus be instantaneous and highly effective.

The process of *qi* flow in the Single Whip posture is also very similar. The activity of both hands can be divided into the *yang* or active hand and the *yin* or passive hand. The back of the body is the *yang* or active side, while the chest is the *yin* or passive side. There is also *yang* within *yin* and vice versa. The hand functioning as *yang* leads the *yin* hand and vice versa. Thus one hand can express both *yin* and *yang* aspects at different times: now *yin* outward and *yang* inward; or *yin* and *yang* substances alternately peaking at the midway point as the real intrinsic jin force. If you can produce and hold fast to the central energy peak of *jin*, your body will not be deflected nor distorted but will be able to store truly refined *qi* in your center[82]. This refined *qi* is called *Haoran zhi Qi* or Magnificently Refined Energy. Governing from the center according to the will of the mind/heart depends on the movement of *qi* outward. Chaotic and unclear *qi* descends downward from the center to flow into the intrinsic force of the crotch, thus stabilizing the lower body and establishing a steady and dependable stance. The upper body must be be empty to move with quick agility. To articulate the qualities required of this posture is difficult, but you can see it clearly in the graceful movements of the 'dance' of the *Taiji* form, which can be likened to the movements of the brush in calligraphy. As in *Taiji*, the ability of a calligrapher to manifest spirit through the motion of her brush and body depends entirely on the level of skill. However, good skills notwithstanding, nothing can be expressed without black ink, as affirmed by Mencius: "You can be good in getting on with people, but you cannot make them skillful."

[82] mind/heart.

g) Management

Management is the device used to organize symbols, men, deeds and situations in space and time between heaven and earth. It allows us to act in concord with others, play the same game as Nature does to exist in harmony with other human beings. We manage our actions in accordance with Nature by observing heavenly principles and moral values through the doctrines of opening and closing, alternating movement and stillness in exact coherence with the natural way of well-being. This is what I call perfection or purifying the Way (*dao*).

h) Intrinsic energy

The substance known as *qi* is the healthy and the strong emanating from heaven. In other words, heaven is the symbol of strength and health, the embodiment of healthy and strong *qi* which never rests nor deteriorates, and which never becomes chaotic nor deviates from its proper course. This is what is called *Zhong-qi* or Centralized Essential Energy, generated through strictly cultivated albeit unmalevolent *gong-fu*. *Zheng-qi* or Truly Rrefined Eenergy is produced in the image of *Qian* (heaven) and *Kun* (earth) interacting upward and downward. Mencius also named this energy *Haoran zhi Qi* or Magnificently Refined Energy. The side effect of intercourse between *Qian* and *Kun*, is the so-called 'crossed intercourse', from which *Heng-qi* or Overcrossed Energy emerges. It possesses hard and sharp qualities and is concealed in the chest area of the body.

With *Heng-qi*, it is difficult to be round and movable, as if hindered by a very sharp and sensitive instrument in your chest on the edge of bursting, making you stressed and anxious. You wish to advance but you cannot; you want to retreat but dare not; you find yourself doing ill-considered actions, throwing caution to the wind. Why does this happen? The blockage causes blood and *qi* to flowing across instead of up and down, leading to disintegration of connections between the upper and lower body.

i) Additional features of Zhong-qi and other elements

Zhong-qi can be interpreted as Centralized Intrinsic Energy, characterized by its undeviating flow up and down the vertical axis of the upper and lower body. Its name suggests a stong link with the pattern (*li*) of *qi* flow, incorporating the concepts of *yin-yang* and the Five Phases (*Wu-xing*), both effective instruments of transformation and generation of all things. In addition to *qi* which manifests visually, there is also invisible qi, called Yuan-qi, which determines the nature of internal resources bestowed by heaven to humans. As mentioned, *qi* and its flow pattern are integral parts of each other, and there is no way for *qi* to flow or be managed without a pattern since both cannot exist in separately for long. If *qi* is not managed, it means the existing management process cannot control qi. If the way of management fails, *qi* also fails. Any breakdown of management will immediately reveal hidden deficiencies – if failed *qi* harbours an overcrossed nature, this shortcoming will be exposed instantly. Only when the management process and *qi* work in concert as one can they create the phenomenon called *Zhong-qi*.

In truth, the manifestation of *Zhong-qi* is beyond description. It is what Mencius called *Haoran zhi Qi* or Magnificently Refined Energy, and merges easily with Ultimate Harmony of *Yuan-qi*. As the saying goes, "Qi is the integral part of management."[83] When we speak of *qi*, we are refering to the pattern which lies within *Taiji* boxing movements and the movement of *qi* as the principle focus of martial arts techniques. Within this pattern there is a governing structure which occupies the central place. This concept is quite difficult to describe with words. Suffice to say that we can only perceive and appreciate refined *qi* through its outward manifestation in forms that are filled with qi, and through its effectiveness in the mind/heart.

Development of heart *qi* enables a practitioner to accept orders from volition created in the kidneys. When the mechanism of the mind starts to work, volition follows the mind toward the five sensitive organs and other

[83] 'Management' here refers to the governing pattern or structure of *qi* flow.

numerous body structures. All visible forms consist of substances which are classified according to their categories. Some substances are also distinguished by their pre-birth and post-birth qualities. Hence, we have so-called 'small virtue collaterals' which produce 'great virtue channels' of arrangements and transformations in the way of Dao, which flows with the current and never against it. This also applies to the Single Whip form. At the start of the postures, the mind/heart wishes to close both hands[84] to utilize jing[85], turning it around by merging with the feet. By bringing the left foot beside the right, you merge your mind/heart with the supporting right foot, spreading out the left hand through direct rotation of *jing* essence[86]. Simultaneously, the right hand moves its *jing* essence in reverse direction to allow the legs to properly utilize *jing* essence of the whole body. Hence the left leg moves in direct rotation while the right in reverse. At the same time, *jing* essence rises to the crown of the head, directing chest jing essence to merge with waist *Jing*-essence, then descending to the crotch to properly open both legs. Then, in the way of 'no-minded mind,' this merging of the upper and lower body generates *jing* essence in all the internal organs so that they run freely through the energy channels and collaterals. As this happens, the *qi* pattern adopted by the body causes the small and large organs to remedy all the errors of the mind/heart.

Hence, mind/heart mechanism works by directing the myriad body structures to take orders from the center[87] through 'small virtue collaterals,' thus creating 'great virtue channels' of arrangement and transformations in the way of Dao, always following the stream and never against it. This is what is known as *Zhong-qi* flowing throughout the body as described above.

j) Additional distinctions between Zhong-qi, Haoran zhi Qi, blood and qi

[84] In other words, to accumulate the energy of both hands.
[85] pre-birth essence.
[86] essential energy.
[87] mind/heart.

Whilst *Zhong-qi*[88] and *Haoran zhi Qi*[89] share only very minor distinctions, they differ quite significantly from blood (*xue*) and *qi*.

Zhong-qi is the embodiment of undeviating and impartial management, the course of the Golden Mean allocated to the *Ultimate Harmony of Yuan-qi*. Once one reaches the state of 'no soft, no hard' associated with the benefits of *Zheng-qi*, one can use this *qi* by moving it along the arms. In fact, the entire body's energy is involved in this process. Nothing under heaven can alter this, nor can any human attain the essence of *gong-fu* through any alternate route other than adhering to the proper way. Hence he who acts through an alternate route cannot get a hold of me, but I can get him. The intrinsic value of *qi* is hidden deep in its central position, as indicated by its name, *Zhong-qi*. Such *qi* is located in the center of the internal organs and body structures and not in alternative or deviated locations.

Haoran zhi Qi is much more difficult to define, and has been the subject of much fascination for the great philosophers, such as Confucius and Mencius, who endeavoured to understand all about *qi* manifestation in the temporal world. Confucius named it 'Ultimate Harmony' while Mencius called it 'Energy Indication' to suggest that it was an embodiment of all that was great, healthy, upright and honest in the world. I prefer to call it a 'very complicated and hard subject,' in so far as it is from the side of the universe which is hard and solid, as opposed to the other side which is soft and weak and and contains *Yuan-qi*. Also known as Ultimate Harmony, *Yuan-qi* is like a reserved and obedient youngster who has much to learn in this world. Therefore *Haoran zhi Qi* is almost indistinguishable from *Zhong-qi*.

When applied to *Taiji* boxing, a practioner must be able to move *Haoran zhi Qi* back and forth. After becoming competent in regenerating this energy through reeling, he must then cultivate self-restraint or self-mastery through repeated practice to integrate *Zhong-qi* into the blood and *qi*. The

[88] Truly Refined Energy.
[89] Magnificently Refined Energy.

energy transmitted along the arteries is called Heng-qi[90]. To rely completely on youthful strength and vigor instead of sensitivity and good *qi* structure will result in defeat. Most players want to know how to attain the power to win, and many even come to consider victory as a matter of chance and good fortune. This attitude generally leads to defeat when pitted against skillful opponents, even if players possess advantageous positions.

Indeed, even if you are able to defeat opponents and subdue them physically by adhering to the rules and principles of *Taiji* boxing, you cannot impact their mind/heart. Only by attaining the realm of *Zhong-qi* can you have power over your adversary's intention: you can stop his advances or retreats and dissolve his entire body into a weak mass, as if he were standing on a round and shaky boulder. Thus destabilized, he will be forced to regain his balance, only to fall because he finds his legs refuse to move. At that instant, he becomes convinced that all these things have befallen him without your involvement. Unaware of the truth, he cannot see his mistakes, so how can they be corrected?

i) Feelings and sensitivity

The principle (*li*) and *qi* develop through external manifestation. Human feelings are a result of complex human relationships and consist of a distinct set of models and patterns which include pauses and transitions in color and rhythm.

In boxing, the fabric of human feelings is reflected in the principle that when you wish to press down you should first rise up, and rise up before you press down. The lively and agile qualities of Nature must be factored into boxing too, otherwise the *Taiji* boxer will be like a block of uncarved wood, a lifeless puppet. A dead snake on the ground provokes a feeling of complacency, but a swooping dragon or graceful tiger widens your eyes, fills your mouth with eager anticipation, your heart filled with yearning to learn exciting martial arts styles. You must be confident you have the

[90] Overcrossed energy.

strength and will to accomplish your aims, even if they tower like a mountain before you. The major aim of the practice is to develop sensitivity and the ability to respond appropriately to any force, even a tiger's; and to understand when to withdraw or advance, using the energy of your uncontrolled opponent in your favor. Whilst a martial arts exponent cannot be without feelings, these must remain hidden during fighting to avoid exposing vulnerability.

j) Beauty

Beauty[91] (*jing*) generated by spiritual movement is also another aspect of motion which obeys the principles of opening and closing, receiving and releasing, bending and straightening. Just as in calligraphy and painting, the beauty of the human body comes from its symmetrical composition — it has a top and a bottom, a left and a right, as stated in *Taiji* theory. *Taiji* postures emphasize the need for symmetrical balance. This artistic perspective is a typical idea handed down by the ancients, who labeled these symmetrical properties under the banner of beauty, or more precisely, scenery beauties, likening them to the beauty of Nature.

In accordance with the principles, the beauty of *Taiji* movements is never disassociated with feelings, so supporting the doctrines. If your mind/heart is not interested in creating beauty in boxing practice, you will never become a good boxer. Lack of beauty in *Taiji* practice cannot lead to mastery. So, the question is how to employ beauty to become a good practitioner? First, one must respect and obey orders, adhering assiduously to rules and established traditions. With time, the rules transform and ultimately disappear to reveal the pure spirit. From my experience, the ultimate dissolution of rules to reveal pure spirit can be likened to celestial flowers falling from the heavens unpredictably and at random. Similarly, the revelation of pure spirit can be likened to striking a table or making a sound or gesture of amazement, that is, powerful external manifestations of the spirit inside.

[91] here meaning 'aesthetics'.

In Nature, it resembles the fresh breeze of springtime sweeping through a misty landscape, willow blossoms hanging down with pride, the bright peaks of mountains, the bubbling of meandering brooks or the glimpse of a stranger at the turn of a narrow path. Glimpsing these instances of natural beauty, your heart is inspired to compose a poem, being filled with the joyful spirit of boundless beauty, the same beauty which you contemplate through boxing practice.

k) Spiritual Power

The external manifestation of spirit comes from the development of jing essence and *qi* and therefore easily risks being harmed. Between heaven and earth, all myriad things are endowed with spiritual self-sufficiency.

For humans, the connection and mutual influence of internal organs and bodily structures manifest outwardly through external parts of the body. However, the spirit manifests itself through some organs and parts of the body, such as the heart, hands, and eyes, and its absence from these organs denotes death. Indeed, whether a person is alive or not can easily be determined by the spiritual condition of their eyes.

Hence, when practicing boxing, your eyes should not express any angry emotions but simply follow the movements of the leading hand. In Holding One Lap Pull on the Robe (*Lan Zha Yi*), the eyes follow the right hand, concentrating on the middle finger. When the hand rises to the level of the head, look straight ahead and at the middle finger, which is fixed at eye level to focus head energy. The hand should not rise above the level of the forehead, and the whole body's spirit should concentrate on the final position of this movement. Hence, *Lan Zha Yi* is the form where the upper and lower body connect through complete spiritual concentration.

While performing Single Whip (*Dan Bian*), maintain visual focus on the left hand which moves slowly left and upward from the lower right side in a large semi-circle at the front of the body. At the end of the movement,

focus on the middle finger of the left hand. The whole movement should be performed slowly and smoothly.

In Turn Body and Punch (*Pi Shen Chui*[92]), focus the eyes on the toe of the back foot, while in Fist Beneath Elbow (*Zhou Di Kan Quan*) and Small Catch and Push (*Xiao Qin Na*) the focus is on the fist located under the elbow. When performing Walking Obliquely And Twist Step (*Xie Xing Ao-bu*), keep the eyes on the right hand while it moves forward. In Fold Head and Push Mountain (*Bao Tou Tui Shan*) focus your eyes on the leading right hand as both hands move forward. In Punch to Crotch (*Zhi Dang Chui*), keep the eyes focused on the punch downward; while in Crouch Step Astride the Tiger (*Xia-bu Kua Hu*), look upward. In Screen Hand and Punch (*Yan Shou Chui*) concentrate your attention on the forward punch; and in Turn Round and Strike (*Hui Shou Chui*), be attentive all around you, keeping watch at every corner, above and below.

Through the eyes, you maintain contact with the subject of your focus at a spiritual level. Actually, the abovementioned doctrines and rules are quite spiritual in themselves, and pure consciousness (*yi*) associates naturally with those practitioners who have established these doctrines in practice .The power and authority of a great commander should be reflected in the brightness of his eyes, his vision penetrating all four cardinal directions, leaving the trace of his spirit all around. In fact, boxing practice is used to create a spiritual atmosphere in places where this is lacking. In other words, instead of Nothingness, the place becomes 'something' due to its filling up with spiritual substance. Where there is miraculous manifestation of the spirit, *yin* and *yang* substances develop naturally. Once your boxing practice reaches this level, you enter the realm of art, where motion and stillness, slow and fast movements, are performed fluidly in accord with the mind/heart. What troublesome and impure things can touch you when your spiritual condition protects you so completely?

l) Transformation of physical strength into spiritual power

[92] Also known as Bi Shen Chui.

Transformation involves changing of established practice and breaking of rules. In a sense, there are two realms of transformation: creativity and apotheosis. The former happens in the beginning, while the latter denotes the end. Those who deal with apotheosis even at the age of seventy continue to follow the mind, never departing from the rules. Once you mature in your martial skills and transcend visual forms, you start to be like the Dragon Spirit, ceaselessly transforming in pursuit of your own way of development, free from other patterns, styles, schools and predecessors, to create a way that is the true product of your own spirituality. The essence of *Taiji* emerges inexplicably, traceless, without beginning or end, just vividly moving, but remaining paradoxically still. Although *Taiji* boxing is called the small way, this 'small' must be treated as a great thing. Words are inadequate to describe these great changes.

The doctrine of creation and destruction allocated to the Five Phases embraces all things under heaven. In hand-to-hand combat, weaker fighters are associated with *yin*. The *yin* substance which is able to destroy *yang* corresponds to water. Water can destroy fire in accordance with the doctrine of the Five Phases, a concept which people find easy to understand.

In contrast, the application in boxing practice of power contained in the energy channels and collaterals is not so easily understood. Energy channels need to be relaxed, made softer and more open for power to be released. Then, using *jing* essence in combination with a quiet mind, one becomes able to listen to the reactions or intentions of the opponent. Only then can one discern the proper opportunity to attack effectively. A solid response to your attack means the opponent has a plan and is trying to implement it. Your counter-response should be soft, otherwise you will not be able to listen to the opponent's condition accurately. If you listen with concentration, using the 'soft' way of listening which involves both your hands and ears, you will perceive the optimal boundaries for your actions, that is, the perimeter within which you may advance safely without losing your position or get beaten. As the saying goes, "To get the tiger cubs without entering the den — only a real hero with innate courage and power is able to do so."

This is a difficult technique within reach of only those with great character and courage. The position required to avoid certain defeat is a very firm and stable stance, one that would instill fear in the opponent. From this stance, suddenly change your position from soft to hard, catch your opponent off guard while she is still in a position of softness in an attempt to attract you into her trap of emptiness. The moment you reach your boundary of 'safety', seek out opportunities to strengthen your position — use form, color, measure, courage, power or deportment — in fact, anything at all which could stabilize your new hard aggressive stance. This is how the

hard destroys the soft through employing fire against water, by maintaining your softness till the edge of the border, only to launch a fierce attack on the opponent at the very last moment. Until that point, continue to obey her 'pull', pretending there is no weakness in her soft position and that she still has the upper hand.

This is the key to practicing *Tui-shou*[93]: anticipate your opponent's moves without him detecting your intentions; retreat in defence without letting him catch hold of you. First, advance softly, listening attentively to your opponent. Then, while still in the soft position of 'listener', begin to turn gradually and retreat, thus attracting the opponent's advance into your trap of emptiness. If he does not advance, it means he understands your maneuver. He may still decide follow you, however, with an eye to catching you out on any tiny error you may make, hoping to turn the tables around and surprise you. He may do this slowly, quickly or in some other cunning manner, but you will find that suddenly, midway through your posture, his softness may have turned into hardness as he grasps your hands and slowly lures you further forward toward him, thus forcing you to lose your position and advance. As soon as he senses you are not stable in your position, he will use all his strength to attack, activating all his knowledge and senses to exploit all opportunities to defeat you.

At the moment of attack, you must quickly change your mode from soft to hard and utilize as little strength as possible to ward-off the crest of his attack. He may then become aware of the dangers of isolating his force if he invests more effort in pursuit of victory. Though he may have regretted not advancing a moment ago, now he dares not advance, knowing that he will be beaten. At the same time, he dares not retreat for to do so now means certain defeat. However, neither advancing nor retreating also leads to certain defeat, just as an exhausted soldier who with his hands tied around his back, facing down and unable to move, is left trapped without supplies. How can he carry out his mission in such conditions? True mastery is the ability to drive the opponent into such a corner with no chance of escape.

[93] 'Push hands', a partner-based Taiji sparring technique.

Hence the sayings, "Softness always conquers hardness," and "Fire overcomes water," which are based on the doctrines of the Five Phases of creation and destruction:

- the heavenly number one procreates water, which is *yin* or soft outwardly and *yang* or hard inwardly. Water corresponds to the kidneys. Learn to advance smoothly and softly, like a wave or a stream flowing all around. Use wisdom before crude strength;
- the earthly number two engenders fire, which is *yang* or strong outside and *yin* or weak inside, and corresponds to the mind/heart. Water and fire have material form but have no fixed substance;
- the heavenly number three creates wood;
- the earthly number four gives birth to metal; both three and four have forms and substance;
- The heavenly number five gives birth to earth, water and fire in equal measures.

In order to gain victory over water, one must possess the great potential of fire, just as during the opponent's smooth and soft advance, one suddenly replaces soft with a hard counter-attack, resembling water transforming into wood. Wood has *yang* substance, which corresponds to the solid *yang* nature hidden within water. Due to *yang*'s growth inside water, the solid substance starts to form. Therefore water and wood are two products of the same category. Hence the easiest way to turn soft into hard is to stimulate *yang* substance.

The above example illustrates how fire overcomes water. Fire also gives birth to earth while earth produces metal. Fire is bright externally and dim internally because of its *yin* nature. The *yin* nature of metal starts to be formed substantially. Metal is associated with the lungs while wood is associated with the liver. Metal is able to overcome wood substances. Metal and fire correspond to the *yin* substance. All this corresponds to the situation when hard overcomes soft: fire destroys water and metal destroys wood.

Both fire and wood manifest their nature externally — the hot and explosive qualities of fire and the intensity of metal substances which embody a hard and strong mind/heart. Once fire rises up the spleen *qi* starts to move, too. Anger comes out with a specific metallic sound. When spleen *qi* starts to move, the liver and kidneys are automatically activated too.

Though it is often said that 'hardness overcomes softness,' the truth is that 'softness always conquers hardness.' Hence we see the opponent first acting softly then proceeding to hardness. This shows that softness contains hardness, in the same way that a gently written work may contain hard-edged themes. In fighting, this is reflected in the sequence of attack where the opponent may advance with an aggressive and hard stance, only to find himself submitting to your 'easier', softer and more sensitive approach. By 'easier' I mean fending off a violent adversary at the peak of his aggression (or hardness) with your forearm, turning your torso and taking backward steps to slightly re-adjust the direction of his attack. Next, try to avoid the movement of his hands and block his view by placing your hands in front of his face. While this happens, let him continue moving in the same direction, carried away by his momentum and forgetting both his left and right sides. This way, you can defend against any attacks from the left or right leaving him at a disadvantage. If you still have difficulty doing this, counter-attack from the side in the same direction of his attack to accelerate his descent into emptiness. Hence the saying, "It is easy to destroy hardness but difficult to destroy softness."

71 • Restricting

The concept of restricting (*hua*) resembles separation of duties between government officials. It is the silent boundary between motion and motionlessness, resulting in emptiness for things which are not restricted within their categories. Once you overstep your boundaries in words or action, you interfere with the other person's interests and parameters.

This can be compared to a boxing stance: the widest step the *Taiji* boxer can take is about two *chi* and five *cun*[94]. To take such a wide step looks quite unnatural. A more natural step would be about one *chi* and two *cun*[95], roughly the distance between the hands. Keep the upper body positioned along the vertical axis, never crossing the axis with the toes, so you can fill the space of the stance solidly. Keep your elbows four to five *fen*[96] apart from the torso, letting the pre-birth essence[97] flow up while taking a half step another *chi*[98] away. Keeping within these proportions, the body is able to move with agility when following the mind/heart's commands, as the upper body works in concert with the lower body, and the left side with the right. Your movements should not overstep the boundaries, as if moving within an invisible cube. The topography of human feelings resembles the mountains and valleys with all its ups and downs reflecting in the heart. Defense and offense, these are the two extremes points in the wide spectrum of human actions. One should always keep defenses up, never weakening even for a moment, lest a lethal blow slips through a narrow crack. A superior man never discloses his real condition.

The primary purpose of boxing practice is to protect one's body. When facing the opponent, there is a tendency to succumb to the excitement and fear of finding oneself in the midst of mental combat. Hence the first half

[94] about 80 cm.
[95] about 40 cm.
[96] about 2.5 cm.
[97] Jing essence.
[98] about 30 cm.

of the *Taiji* routine is devoted mostly to rules and principles and not to applications; while in the second half, ways of application are discussed and demonstrated. Once these are grasped, they must not be used frivolously but only in self-defense. Most of the time, *Taiji* boxing takes the form of individual practice with empty hands against invisible opponents who attack from all directions. generally speaking, your mastery will develop over time through individual practice, concentrating first on the foundation, from which you will gain much knowledge to guide you through life and health, just as branches and leaves grow from a strong trunk. Building this knowledge is quite a difficult task initially, but the difficulties will soon disappear once you devote yourself wholeheartedly to practice and exert utmost efforts.

72 • The secret of success in combat

When two opponents start fighting, each thinks of victory. Both fighters push against each other with about ninety percent of their resources, but it is really the remaining ten percent which determines the final outcome. The question is: who will seize this remaining ten percent to gain advantage in the final position? If your opponent takes it first, you lose; if you seize it first, victory is yours. Both opponents are equally strong and fully alert at both ends of the line. As the saying goes, "Before setting out on one's journey, check the way to go." *Jing* essence culminates at the crown of the head and guides *Zhong-qi* upward. The position of your hands should be slightly higher than the opponent's. Lean your torso slightly forward to draw nearer to the opponent, thus restraining him. Do not let him dominate by pushing his force into your part of the 'common space'. Your advantage lies in the speed you establish: if your spirit rises slowly, you will lose; if it rises rapidly, you will have the advantage. To maintain this advantage, move your hands quickly forward as if going to break a bamboo stick — it can be done if you are swift enough.

The endgame in chess is similar: victory is determined by a single move. When chasing a deer, the swift-footed succeeds. Before going into action, troops should first be supplied with provisions and fodder. This is what is meant by "check the way to go" — it refers to the method of mental preparation. Hence to practice *Taiji* boxing successfully, you need to move all parts of the body simultaneously to gain an advantageous position in accord with your pulse and breath, using opening and closing. Before raising your hands, you need to activate them to control the upper position. Don't let *shen*, *qi*, blood and the pulse (*mai*) be interrupted even for a moment. Even while the play of hands goes on, you should always be thinking of ways to improve your position. To obtain advantage, your turns need to be agile and your movements quick. Train your body in the moves everyday during sparring practice so that they become second nature. This way you will never lose. Your movements for every single position will be directed by your mind/heart, shifting freely from straight streams to steep turns.

End of Introduction

VOLUME ONE:

OVERVIEW
&
POSTURES 1-12

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PART 1:

OVERVIEW

When learning *Taijiquan*, the practitioner cannot afford any display of irreverence. Outwardly, one must show respect to one's masters and friends. Inwardly, one must respect the body and mind. If one cannot practice self-control and restraint, how can the art of *Taijiquan* be mastered?

When learning *Taijiquan*, one cannot commit any violence, otherwise one will inevitably get into trouble. All manner of violence or assault is inadmissible. One should demonstrate tactful behavior; otherwise, any display of violence will inevitably lead to damage within.

The *Taijiquan* practioner should never be conceited nor self-satisfied, otherwise she who is complacent provokes trouble. As the saying goes, "No one can attain final perfection." This means that only a modest practitioner is able to sufficiently purify her mind to adopt the teachings of the master. Isn't this what is known as "goodness and perfection"? Why not produce more good in the hope of perfection? By sharing good with others, we multiply goodness.

The *Taijiquan* practioner must apply ceaseless efforts to make his mind penetratingly aware of each tiny transformation taking place in the postures. If not, he who doesn't pay attention to his movements and postures will lose control over his senses and as a result, provoke confusion and disorder This will manifest in the upper body as awkwardness and sluggishness, while the lower body becomes unbalanced and 'uprooted'.

One must always be very careful and sensitive, keeping the eyes open. Otherwise, the blood arteries and energy channels will become impassable, leading to fragmentation of the entire *Taiji* routine, irregular and abrupt *qi* flow, resulting in a loss of integrity and harmony of *yuan-qi* or primordial energy.

The *Taijiquan* practioner must first of all study the theory and learn the classics to grasp the nature and core principles of *Taijiquan*. This will make the practice and mastery of *Taijiquan* easier.

The *Taijiquan* practioner should understand the principles of *yin* and *yang*, opening and closing, as well as her own body, which is the natural embodiment of universal macrocosmic principles. A good master will have no need to add or detract from these principles, abiding them as the flawless doctrines of the Golden Mean.

Although *Taijiquan* does not play a significant part in modern society, it exists still in some countries thanks to dedicated followers who do not treat it as a martial art, but focus instead on studying the theory of the art, applying its laws and principles during infantry exercises and marches.

Compare this, in contrast, with the indifferent and negligent officials of this country, who during infantry exercises or combat, place more importance on using strength and brute force. How can such ignorant philistines hope to save society and maintain the integrity of this country? So, keep your mind open and do not be misled nor deluded by the words of such "grass and firewood collectors"!

The *Taijiquan* practioner should not be involved in any vice such as robbery, gambling, adultery, sexual seduction, immoral acts, which only corrupt his heavenly soul and provoke the spirits and the wrath of gods. What can such a 'practitioner' contribute to the world? How can he possibly be of help to others?

The *Taijiquan* practioner should not be impulsive nor fierce, a bully nor an oppressor. Those who indulge in these traits will be driven to crime.

If the reader encounters any errors, omissions or missing words in this book, please do not hesitate to contact the publisher for corrections.

Section 1

Postures: 1. Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle (*Jin-gang Dao Dui*)

Note: This is the only *Taiji* form in which the principle of yin and yang proportions is completely manifested.

Section 2

Postures:
2. Holding One Lap Pull on the Robe (*Lan Zha Yi*)
3. Single Whip (*Dan Bian*)
4. Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle (*Jin-gang Dao Dui*)

Note: These three postures give birth to the Two Forms (*Liang-yi*). The repetition of *Jin-gang Dao Dui* forms the focus of this section.

Section 3

Postures:
5. White Goose Reveals Its Wings (*Bai E Liang Chi*)
6. Brush Knee and Twist Step (*Lou Xi Ao-bu*)

Note: These two forms create the Four Symbols . Starting from *Bai E Liang Chi* and followed by *Lou Xi Ao-bu*, these two postures represent the four symbols of *Qian*, Kun, *Kan* and *Li* in their four positions respectively.

Section 4

Postures: 7. Posture of Previous Implication (*Chu Shou*)
8. Walking Obliquely and Twist Step (*Xie-xing Ao-bu*)

Note: Both postures represent the moment the Four Symbols give birth to the Four Cornered Figures of the Eight Trigrams: *Dui, Zhen, Xun and Gen.*

Section 5

Postures: 9. Second Posture of Implication (*Zai Shou*)
10. Lower Stance in Front of Chamber and Twist Step (*Qian Tang Ao-bu*)
11. Screening Hand Strike with Hidden Forearm (*Yan Shou Gong Chui*)
12. Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle (*Jin-gang Dao Dui*)

Note: The true purpose of these four postures is to store *jing* essence until its complete outward manifestation through reverting to the primordial motif of *Taiji.*

Section 6

Postures: 13. Turn Body and Punch (*Pi Shen Chui*)
14. Turn and Lean by Shoulder and Back (*Bei She Kao*)
15. Fist Beneath Elbow (*Zhou Di Kan Quan*)
16. Step Back and Whirl Arms as a Coiling Silk Thread (*Dao Juan Hong*)
17. White Goose Reveals Its Wings (*Bai E Liang Chi*)
18. Brush Knee and Twist Step (*Lou-xi Ao-bu*)

Note: These six postures represent the technique of turning round, bending and retreating. All transformations, if performed

correctly within the framework of this section, are generally sufficient.

Section 7

Postures: 19. Fan Through the Back or Flash Arms Like a Fan (*Shan Tong Bei*)
20. Screen Hand and Punch (*Yan Shou Chui*)
21. Holding One Lap Pull on the Robe (*Lan Zha Yi*)
22. Single Whip (*Dan Bian*)

Note: These four postures represent the requirements for turning the body around and reverting to a single plane.

Section 8

Postures: 23. Wave Hands Like Clouds (*Shang Yun Shou*) – 1st performance
24. High Pat on Horse (*Gao Tan Ma*)
25. Rub with Right Foot
26. Rub with Left Foot (*Zuo You Ca Jiao*)
27. Well-balanced Single Whip (*Zhong Dan Bian*)
28. Strike Down like Planting into the Ground (*Xia Yan Shou*)
29. Double Raise Kick (*Er Qi Jiao*)
30. Look at a Violent Beast (*Shou Tou Shi*)
31. Kick with Toe (*Ti Yi Jiao*)
32. Kick with Heel (*Deng Yi Gen*)
33. Screen Hand and Punch (*Yan Shou Chui*)
34. Small Catch and Push (*Xiao Qin Na*)
35. Grasp Head and Push Mountain (*Bao Tou Tui Shan*)
36. Single Whip (*Dan Bian*)

Note: All thirteen postures represent the technique of moving sideways with waving hands and cutting in with left and right kicks. It includes techniques of crouching step, bending the body, jumping and closing motions through balancing the four extremities.

The application of *Ti Yi Jiao* and *Deng Yi Gen* (Kick with Toe and Kick with Heel) represent two big round turns. *Xiao qin Na* represents a skipping step. *Shou Tou Shi* represents the defense of the heart area and knees.

All thirteen postures can be expressed within a small circle to enable the practitioner to defend against multiple opponents attacking from all sides. In the case of sustained aggression, the wall of defense cannot be broken nor cut off, so all the postures must be performed at one go without any breaks.

Section 9

Postures:
37. Roll Foward (*Qian Zhao*)
38. Roll Backward (*Hou Zhao*)
39. Wild Horse Shakes Its Mane (*Ye Ma Feng Zhong*)
40. Single Whip (*Dan Bian*)
41. Fair Lady Works at Shuttles (*Yu Nu Chuan Suo*)
42. Holding One Lap Pull on the Robe (*Lan Zha Yi*)
43. Single Whip (*Dan Bian*)

Note: All seven postures oriented forward or backward represent the way the upper and lower extremities move synchronously, with eyes kept on the leading hand.

Wild Horse Shakes Its Mane on Both Sides denotes the swift technique of stepping up; Fair Lady Works at Shuttles consists of about-turns to the right; Single Whip is used to return *qi* to the Dan-tian, calming down and pacifying the

mind and heart. All seven postures have significant functions in hand-to-hand combat.

Section 10

Postures:

44. Wave Hands Like Clouds (*Zhong Yun Shou*) – 2nd performance
45. Shake Foot (*Bai Jiao*)
46. Crouch Step Like a Snake Creeping Out of a House (*Yi Tang She*)
47. Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg (*Jin Ji Du Li*)
48. Raise Lamp Toward heaven (*Chao Tian Deng*)
49. Precious Pearl Rolled Back into Curtain (*Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian*)
50. White Goose Reveals Its Wings (*Bai E Liang Chi*)
51. Brush Knees and Twist Step (*Lou-xi Ao-bu*)
52. Fan Through the Back or Flash Arms Like a Fan (*Shan Tong Bei*)
53. Screen Hand and Punch (*Yan Shou Chui*)
54. Holding One Lap Pull on the Robe (*Lan Zha Yi*)
55. Single Whip (*Dan Bian*)

Note: All twelve postures represent the technique of kicking with toes and heels into different parts of the body. Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg and Rise Lamp Toward heaven are used to attack the upper part of the body with the knee and foot. The next seven postures may be performed in this section as an option. Note that performing all twelve postures at one go as a single form may be useful against sustained aggression.

Section 11

Postures: 56. Wave Hands Like Clouds (*Xia Yun Shou*) – last performance
57. High Pat on Horse (*Gao Tan Ma*)
58. Slap on Foot with Crossed Hand (*Shi-zi Jiao*)
59. Punch to Crotch (*Zhi Dang Chui*)
60. Green Dragon Out of the Water (*Qing Long Chu Shui*)
61. Single Whip (*Dan Bian*)

Note: All six postures demonstrate the technique of crossing legs, also known as *Shi Zhi Kao*. Punch to Crotch is used to restrict the opponent's ability. Green Dragon Out of the Water means to jump upward and forward with or without turning around.

Section 12

Postures: 62. Ground Covered with Brocade (*Pu Di Jin*)
63. Step Up to Form Seven Stars of the Dipper (*Shang-bu Qi Xing*)
64. Crouch Step to Stride Over the Tiger (*Xia-bu Kua Hu*)

Note: These three postures are done in a single sequence: stretch out the right leg whilst in a sitting position on the ground, then step up and crouch down; and then raise the body.

Section 13

Postures: 65. Shake Foot (*Bai Jiao*)
66. Head-on Blow (*Dang Tou Pao*)

Note: These two postures represent the technique of turning around and kicking, thus defending at the level of the face and chest.

The above thirteen sections of the *Taiji* form start from cultural doctrines and intellectual concepts and end with boxing techniques and martial skills.

III • Diagram of Wuji or No Extremes

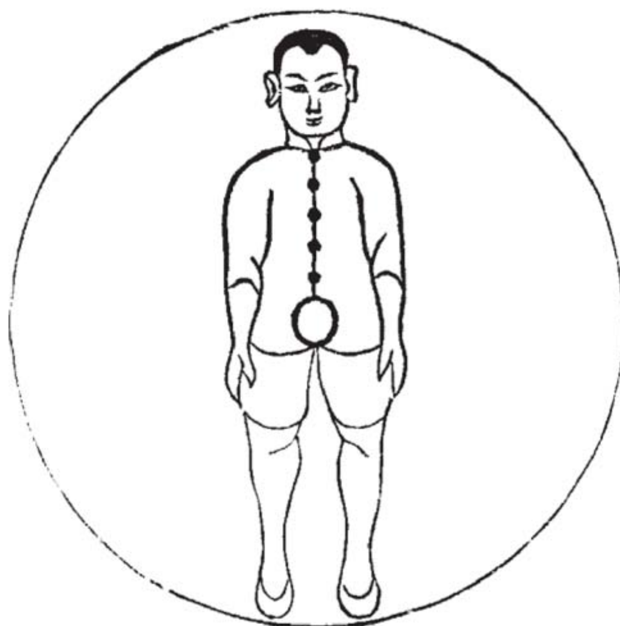


Fig. 1.III.1 Diagram of Wuji or No Extremes

Wuji or Nothingness is the Grand Primordial state called the Great Chaos. This is the moment of initial arrival, when the practitioner appears on stage at a boxing performance, standing upright and looking directly ahead, stabilizing his physical and mental state and establishing natural breathing.

It is important to seek stillness from within through conscious effort rather than postural rigidity. Hang shoulders loosely and drop the elbows, relax and lower the arms, turn both palms inward to face the thighs. These adjustments will prevent the shoulders and elbows becoming angular and blocked. Keep the shoulders in a natural and relaxed position, the feet shoulder-width apart and the toes pointing forward parallel to each other. Stillness of the body means stillness of the mind. Empty the mind of thought — the mind should be full of nothing, not a single thought. A still center represents the Great Chaos or *Wuji*, its name describing the initial cosmic state of non-differentiation prior to the appearance of forms. Therefore the form is also called Ultimate Nothingness.

IV • Diagram of Taiji or Supreme Extremes

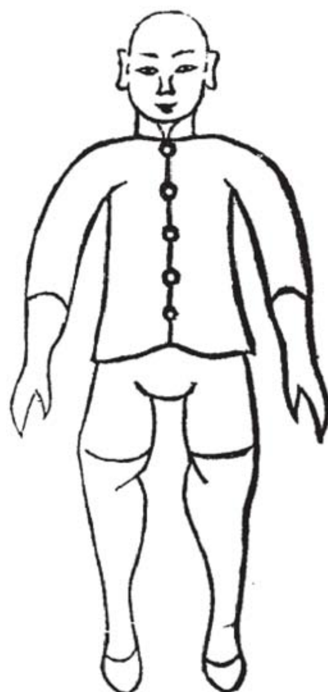


Fig. 1.iv.1 Diagram of Taiji or Supreme Extremes

Taiji is born of *Wuji* or Ultimate Nothingness. Although this state represents something shaped with a sound, it is still known as Absolute Nothingness. Conversely, the state of *Wuji* (Ultimate Nothingness) can also be defined as *Taiji*.

Although *Taiji* is known as shapeless and soundless, the pre-origin of the seed of a great fruit begins to take form, which will eventually transform into a seedling. This is the formless newborn mechanism of motion and motionlessness, not yet sufficiently formed to be launched or represented as a seed. heaven and earth are still in the state of the shapeless Oneness or the Great Chaos, *Wuji*, a traditional name describing the initial cosmic state of non-differentiation between *yin* and *yang*. Still, the mechanism of differentiation already exists, marking the condition just prior to the ap-

pearance of forms, a pivotal point between opposing impulses from which creative activity emanates.

This transition from external stillness to readiness for movement is known as going from *Wuji* to *Taiji*. Movement will cause clear *qi* to ascend to heaven, and 'muddy' or impure *qi* to fall to earth. Prior to this, there is no differention between clear and impure *qi*. Thus, the ancestors used the term *Taiji* to denote the non-separated state depicted by heaven and earth, *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases, a state beyond any name or concept. So when we talk about *Taiji*, we mean the initial form of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases.

At the starting position of the *Taiji* performance, although the four extremities are still motionless, the internal mechanism of *yin* and *yang*, opening and closing, growth and decline, full and empty contained in the mind/heart and abdomen is maintained properly due to the adjustment of all the body's parts. At this very moment, unification of volition and the concentration of spirit will occur if the starting position of the form is treated respectfully and carefully, whilst the dualistic principles of *yin* and *yang*, opening and closing, growth and decline, full and empty and so on are still beyond visual manifestation and thus cannot be defined or named. For the sake of clarity, we use the term *Taiji* to describe the initial or preparatory stage of the entire routine.

Preparation is necessary to establish one's balance and bearing prior to movement. Though not visible to the eye, it is crucial. Before starting to practice the *Taiji* routine the student must first purify her heart and empty her mind of thought. As a result, she will possess a look of serenity, and her physical and mental conditions will be completely mobilized to launch the mechanisms of *Taiji* motion. The aim of the practitioner is to unite the two extremes into one in order to return to *Wuji* through practice and accomplishment of the *Taiji* routine.

PART 2:

POSTURES 1-12

Posture 1

Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle[1]

Jin-gang Dao Dui

1. Diagram of the posture

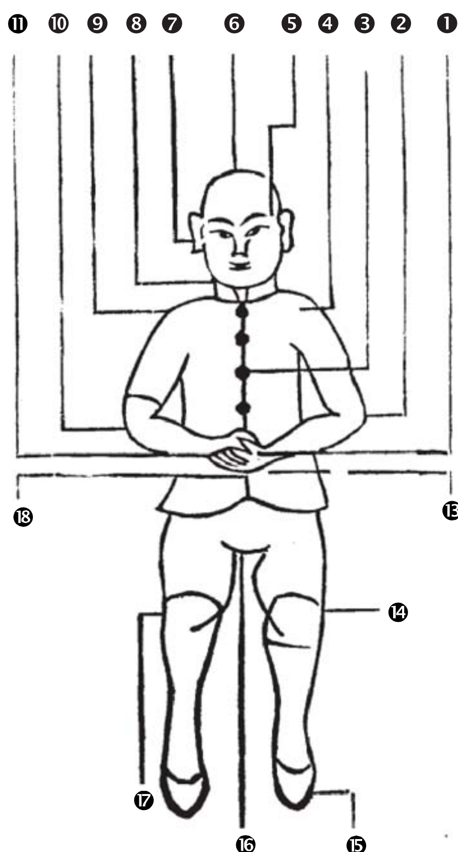


Fig. 1.1.1 Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle (Jin-gang Dao Dui)

[1] This posture is also known as 'Fist to Protect One's Center'.

Inscriptions:

❶ the left wrist faces upward and correlates with the nose;

❷ the left elbow drops down and must be placed slightly to one side to prop up the right fist;

❸ calm your mind/heart; once the mind is calm, *qi* flows smoothly in full harmony;

❹ the left shoulder is relaxed and dropped down; do not lift it up, otherwise it will be angular and blocked;

❺ look straight ahead and do not cast your eyes sideward, otherwise the mind will be scattered and volition in disarray;

❻ the whole body's spirit is focused and led by the top of the head, hence the crown of the head is called *ding-jin*; it has a guiding function and seems to lie between existence and non-existence;

❼ concentrate wholeheartedly on what can be heard by your ears and what is out of hearing;

❽ keep your neck upright;

❾ relax and let the right shoulder sink down;

❿ hang the right elbow down, not lifting it up even a little;

⓫ the right fist lies in the left palm 5-6 *cun* below the chest.

⓬ return *qi* to the Dan-tian;

⓭ bend the left knee, otherwise the crotch area will not be opened properly;

⓮ hold the left foot parallel to right one, toes pointing forward. Shift your body weight slightly forward to press firmly on the acupoints in the big toes: Da-zhong, Yin-bai and Da-dun;

⓯ the crotch must be rounded-in and empty so that the *jing* essence can develop in the legs; don't press the crotch from both sides;

⓰ slightly bend the right knee, otherwise the crotch will not be opened properly;

⓱ let the intrinsic force in the waist sink down to make it more substantial.

During *Taijiquan* practice there is usually no need to orient one's initial position strictly to the cardinal directions. However, since the Big Dipper is placed north, the practitioner should respectfully face in this direction, since it is the source of inherent energy in the human body, known as *Zhong-qi* or Centralized Intrinsic Energy. Hence all diagrams presented in this book faces north, with the back to the south, the east at the right and west at the left.

To determine the way of heaven you need to resort to the *yin* and *yang* substances; to establish the way of earth you need to apply the concept of soft and hard; to find the way of humans you need benevolence and righteousness.

Fill up your legs and arms with silk-reeling energy; lift up your head and look straight ahead. When sitting, be like a door-hinge; while standing, be like an empty room.

Confucius said, "Coming across irreverence, don't look at it; coming across irreverence, don't listen to it; coming across irreverence, don't even talk about it; coming across irreverence, don't move it." Practicing *Taijiquan*, try to engage honourably and respectfully with it as a natural part of the process. Following the established practice and rules, look at the *Taiji* form, listen to it, talk about it and move to it from within. When not practicing the *Taiji* form, calm your mind and heart and pacify your *qi* to blend into the *Taiji* spiritual motif. During practice, quieten your spirit and still your *qi* to allow the upper and lower limbs to move freely and naturally without pretense. Try to initiate the mechanism of *Taijiquan* properly in accordance with intrinsic norms and rites. The rites of *Taijiquan* state that one should not let slow inert *qi* flow through the body. If this sluggish energy 'thickens', you will need to use a great number of movements to prevent the forming of a myriad diseases by driving this energy out from all parts of the body.

The rites are based on respect and joy emanates from peace and harmony. If you can be respectful and maintain peace and harmony, you will become a good practitioner of *Taijiquan*. It is said, "*Taijiquan* is the way of art." As

the Master states, "If the established rules are extremely strict, even a highly skilled sage will not be able to follow them despite his *gong-fu*." If it is the subject of art, what should be done to grasp it? It is also said that through *Taiji* practice you learn to cultivate your morality, correct your character and protect your life. As Mencius states, "Without learning established practice and rules, one cannot be compliant and restrained in behavior."

Practicing the way of *Taiji*, one who does not transgress the classical writings and shows respect to every single word from the very beginning to end, can devote himself to the wholehearted study of *Taiji*. Improving his volition until it is released from the ambitions trapped in his chest, he will reach the state of Oneness in accord with the single principle of *Taiji*. This principle or Oneness will be studied in the pages below.

2. *Diagram of left yang and right yin*

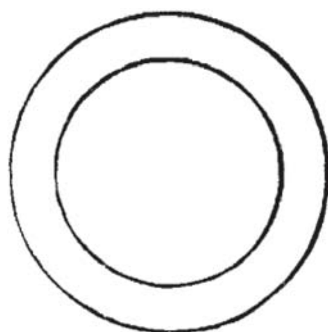


Fig. 1.1.2 Diagram of left yang and right yin

The first posture requires the upper and lower limbs to be moved and turned according to the diagram. The left hand corresponds to the internal circle of *yang*, where the left hand and left foot are in motion. The right hand corresponds to the external circle of *yin*, where the right hand and right foot are in motion. Without deviation from the form, all becomes substantial and operates in unison at one go: the left hand is slightly ahead while the right hand is behind; the left hand is inside while the right hand is outside.

According to the mechanism of motion, *yang* is followed by *yin*, so *yang* is inside while *yin* outside.

This diagram depicts the interaction between *yin* and *yang*, resulting in the creation of myriad things. So *yin* and *yang* can be considered as one aspect of *Taijiquan*'s application.

3. *Diagram of the mechanism according to which qi moves throughout the body*

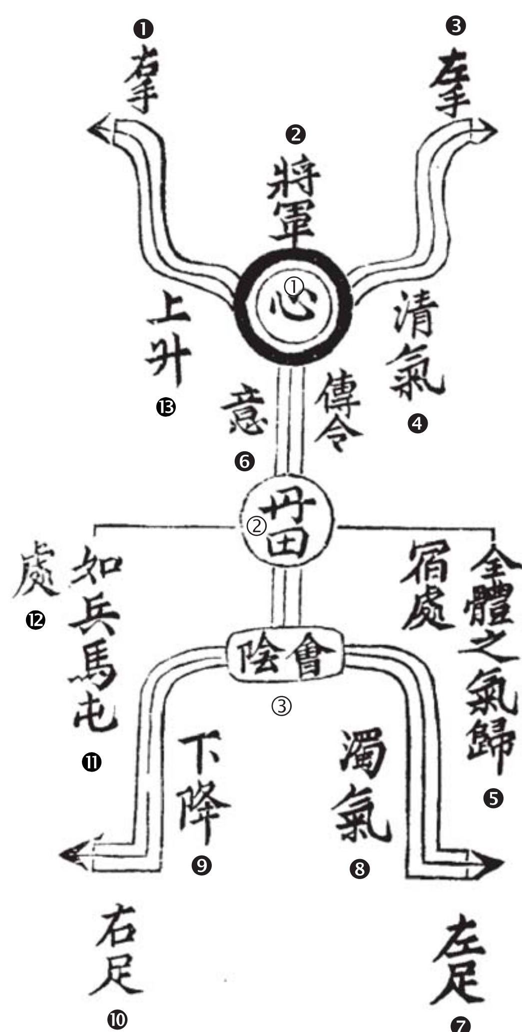


Fig. 1.1.3 Diagram of the mechanism according to which qi moves throughout the body

Inscriptions around the figure:

- ❶ right hand;
- ❷ commander;
- ❸ left hand;
- ❹ clear *qi*;
- ❺ issued order;
- ❻ the place of the whole body's *qi* return;
- ❼ left leg;
- ❽ impure or muddy *qi*;
- ❾ descend;
- ❿ right leg;
- ⓫ this place resembles an assembly of infantry and horses.
- ⓬ consciousness;
- ⓭ ascend.

Inscriptions down the vertical axis:

- ① mind/heart;
- ② Dan-tian;
- ③ acupoint Hui-yin.

As Mencius states, "Volition is the commander of *qi* which fills the whole body up." The mind/heart is like the general while *qi* is like the infantry; the general gives orders and the troops carry them out obediently in the following order: clear *qi* ascends to the hands while muddy or impure *qi* descends to the feet. *Qi* that flows to the fingers is true *qi*, and its nature is to ascend. Flowing with impure *qi* that descends, the entire *qi* flow resembles two stakes made from the same piece of wood whose purpose is to link up all the parts and internal organs of the body.

The mechanism of *qi* is set to reel energy, starting from inside the forearm and threading *jin* force[2] along the upper and lower extremities.

[2] intrinsic force.

4. *Mechanism of qi reeling along the arms*

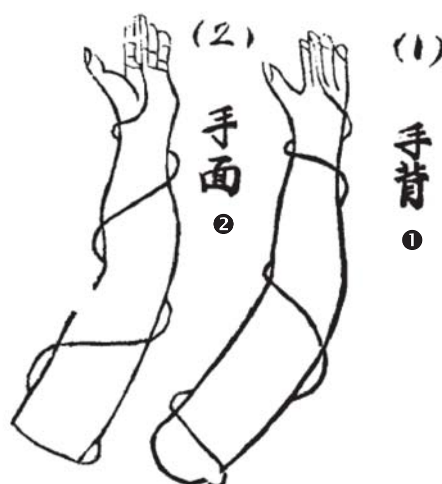


Fig. 1.1.4 Mechanism of qi reeling along the arms

Inscriptions:

❶ posterior (external) side of arm;

This form represents *jin* or intrinsic force flowing from the shoulders toward the fingertips.

❷ inside of arm;

This form represents *jin* force flowing from the fingers toward the armpits and shoulders. The first figure depicts *jin* force flowing out; the second figure depicts *jin* force coming in.

The arm's *jin* force emanates from the mind/heart and runs through the shoulders and elbows toward the fingers. Thus it flows in direct rotation (*shun*) from bone to skin, from shoulder to finger, releasing *jing* essence outwards.

Jing essence flowing in reverse direction from fingers to shoulder is known as '*jing* essence getting in,' and can be used to attract opponents to advance and hence fall into emptiness.

5. *Diagram of the sharp-pointed crotch*



Fig. 1.1.5 Diagram of the sharp-pointed crotch

Inscriptions:

- ❶ acupoint Heng-gu;
- ❷ the crotch should be rounded, don't narrow it too much with a high stance.

Jin force of both legs emanates from the toes to coil upwards along the ankles, knees and thighs toward the crotch, also known as acupoint Hui-yin. Upon reaching the heel of the foot, *jin* force gradually enters the Tong-gu and Da-zhong acupoints located on the outside of the foot, then passes through acupoints Yin-bai, Da-dun and Li-dui on the toes, eventually merging directly with the ground.

The name for this posture, *Jin-gang*, consists of two characters which when taken together literally means 'steel', but has spiritual connotations when treated separately: the latter character *gang*[3] denotes *jing* essence while the former character, *jin*[4] stands for firm and unbending qualities. In fact,

[3] translates literally as 'firm'.
[4] a general term for all metals.

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when spoken as a phrase, the four characters of the *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture resonate like a cannon-shot, suggesting a sacred incantation.

The posture's name also conjures the image of a warrior holding a magic pestle in his hands, as if ready to pounding grains in a mortar. Reflecting this, the right hand is clenched into a fist in imitation of a heavy pestle while the left hand has its palm facing upwards to form a cup-like mortar. Imbued with their respective firm and heavy qualities, both hands clamp down together firmly into a cup to protect the heart area, that is, the central part of the body. This is how the name of the posture was derived.

In the initial position, the nose can be considered as the dividing line between the right and left sides of the body. In addition, the left hand controls the left half of the body while the right hand controls the right. The arms and legs on each side of the body move simultaneously to protect the trunk from both sides. This means that great attention needs to be paid to the flow of *qi*, since the movement of the hands effect the correct positioning of the elbows and upper arms, and the movement of the whole body. *Qi* flow in both arms starts when the hands lift upwards, so they should not be too high, otherwise the position of the upper body will be stiff and blocked. The movement of the hands leads the movement of the lower body and vice versa, while the position of the central body (including the torso) is naturally defined through the connection between the upper and lower body. Once *qi* flows throughout the body, the whole posture will be expressed properly. Keep the torso upright and the elbows down, sink the shoulders and hang the arms naturally. Keep both feet a shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward. Slightly bend the knees to open the crotch area for *jin* force to pass through.

Once the crotch is opened and empty, the heart *qi* commences its flow from the left hand and follows the left foot's half step forward. Then the right hand leads the right foot, drawing a circle upward until it stops in front of left hand. Both hands form a hold-ball[5] gesture. Lower the right hand

[5] as if one is holding a ball in both hands.

slowly while the inward-facing left palm stops at the level of the heart. The right hand and right foot is associated with emptiness and the left hand and left foot to fullness. Taking a step up, the supporting left leg props up the whole body so that acupoint Bai-hui can guide clear *qi* upwards and muddy *qi* downwards. When clear *qi* goes up the restless heart *qi* does not allow muddy *qi* to descend to the feet as a natural result of the stable stance. Eventually, clear *qi* from the upper part returns to the Dan-tian.

Once the heart *qi* flows down, the *qi* of the whole body sinks downward. These conditions have to be maintained throughout the *Taiji* routine from beginning to the end, following the criteria of the true body position, that is, maintaining connections between the full and empty, the soft and hard, the upper and lower body and all the four corners, thus enabling the practitioner place her feet in the correct stance.

Therefore one starts to be enveloped with the *qi* of the arms, letting the head rule and manage the motion of solid *qi* within the empty body's circulation, like a mighty chaotic stream smashing through blocked movements in each posture. Eventually, *qi* will return completely into the structure of the *Taiji* motif without leaving any traces. The flow of *qi* can be visualized as the tracing of invisible fingers around the body, guiding the endless circulation of internal energies throughout the body. Thus, the *Taiji* motif exists to explain the *Taiji* doctrine.

The crotch area is at the root of both thighs and must be opened. The size of this opening is not to be taken literally. If opened with conscious effort, even a tiny crack the width of a silk thread will suffice; without it, even a width of 3 *chi*[6] would not be sufficient to open the crotch. This point is of particular importance to wayward students. The way of *Taiji* practice is to never extend beyond the round *Taiji* motif, which may be positioned upright or obliquely, oriented to the left or right, slowly or rapidly, with *yin* or *yang* substances, shaped or shapeless — all depends on the posture performed within the framework of the endless circular motion.

[6] about 1 metre.

The creation of *yin* and *yang qi* in the body needs to include moral aspects to truly embody *Taiji*. 'Formless' *Taiji* contains 'formed' *Taiji*. Human knowledge is within the realm of tangible *Taiji* if intangible *Taiji* is followed. What other sort of *Taiji* can one follow, if not the natural way? Sstudents may know how to practice *qi* exercises, yet they do not know how to follow the natural way. For example, we see day as opening and night as closing, hence opening and closing are the natural conditions of *Taiji*. This can be expressed in *Taiji* boxing by moving up or down or by accumulating and releasing energy invisibly but continuously in the postures — a point is not often assiduously observed by practioners.

If one dispenses with *qi* during *Taijiquan* practice the body will become wholly dependent on motion, a sub-optimal condition since the body actually relies on solid *qi* for proper nourishment and protection from harm. In truth, most people are generally ignorant of the other side of *Taiji* practice known as 'the art of softness.' They are not aware that by applying their *gong-fu* they can produce the crash of a thousand hammers powerful enough to smash a hundred steel surfaces, then return instantly to softness. Softness produces solidity; solidity and softness leave no visible traces and are out of the realms of visible manifestation. When contemplating it, we perceive it as having a soft quality, so naming it 'softness.' What other name could fit more naturally? 'Soft' is the term we use to contrast against the solid and the hard. In the martial arts, we cannot call *Taijiquan* soft or solid because the true meaning of *Taiji* is both solidity and softness combined into something invisible, an indefinable quality known as *gong-fu* in its countless manifestations. Hence its achievements are difficult to perceive and can only be discerned through particular cases and conditions. In a sense, it can only be grasped through Untrue-Mind and No-Absent-Mind, through No-Encouragement and No-Assistance.

Through picturing the entire routine from the initial to final postures, we can grasp the boxing art visually. The visualizations help make the invisible visible, the mechanism of mind/heart enters the magnificent state of mastery, and the original ultimately returns to the state of No-mind. Only after

this can we talk of true Boxing. Visible Boxing resides in one's mind/heart and is organized in accordance with the heavenly mechanism. Its main qualities manifest as agility and liveliness, attributes which we encounter everywhere. Such boxing is beyond the mundane world, so those who do not devote themselves completely to the art of cultivation will never know how hard it is to follow its forms properly and visualize the *Taiji* routine with the mechanisms of *qi* working naturally. Unmanaged *qi* flow has no structure and cannot realize its functions properly. *Qi* is an integral part of the heavenly pattern (*li*) and vice versa. The two are one and the one is two. Hence thousands of changes and a myriad transformations move endlessly forward and backward, up and down. Even a devoted student will be unable to exhaust all her capabilities until the very end.

The mind/heart is the Host of the body; the kidneys are the vivid source. One must clear up one's mind/heart and have the desire to cultivate one's origin — literally, the place where the roots of one's original nature emerge. The work must be done carefully to keep the roots from harm. From the base of healthy and strong roots one can then add additional techniques to harvest many benefits. Once you grasp the mainstream, the other many tributaries will be at your disposal as well.

6. *Conclusion*

Pure *yin* is represented by soft (as in yielding) hands while pure *yang* by hard hands. In the *yin-yang* proportion of one tenth to nine tenths ($^{1}/_{10} : {}^{9}/_{10}$) indicates extreme solidity. Under such conditions, you can only fight with rods. The *yin-yang* proportion of two tenths to eight tenths ($^{2}/_{10} : {}^{8}/_{10}$), as embodied in Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle, allows you to fight in hand-to-hand combat. The proportion of three tenths versus seven tenths ($^{3}/_{10} : {}^{7}/_{10}$) allows you to feel and experience the hard; while the proportion of four to six tenths ($^{4}/_{10} : {}^{6}/_{10}$) shows your skillful hands. When you reach the equilibrated proportion of five tenths to five tenths ($^{5}/_{10} : {}^{5}/_{10}$), the perfection of your mastery is fully manifest.

This means that voidness of *Taiji* returns to nothingness through transformations. Each posture of the *Taiji* routine includes so many wonders that even thousands of words cannot suffice to describe them. Still, the whole meaning of *Taiji*'s can be expressed in a single body gesture. Hence *gong-fu* is very hard to master and takes a long time. As a proverb says, "A myriad punches form a strong spirit which helps to maintain everyday martial arts practice."

7. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The present *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture embodies a union of *yin* and *yang* virtues gathered in the chest as a mass of Supreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*, which fills up all the four extremities until they become soft or hard, thus completely fulfilling the requirements of the mind/heart. Solidity corresponds to *Qian*, symbol of the strong and healthy, while the symbol of docility, *Kun*, provides tranquility. Once *yin* and *yang* exist in correct proportion, no traces of movements are left behind, as if the soft becomes the hard, which in turn reverts back to soft again. Hardness and softness represent the combined virtues of *yin* and *yang*, correlating to *Qian* and *Kun*[7] in a myriad manifestations.

8. *Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle*

This posture is a union of *jing* essence and *shen*, the upper and lower body, the Four Corners and the Four Cardinal directions, bending and stretching through endless changes and transformations, which come out from unchanging and always 'muddy' and chaotic *Taiji*, the complete nothingness.

Throughout his lifetime, a man has no better goal than to cultivate the Supreme Harmony of the beautiful brocade decorated with bunches of

[7] heaven and earth respectively.

flowers[8]. In the heavens, the Buddha's Warrior Attendant holds a jade pestle of goodness to pound it through the mundane world down into hell, the realm of evil spirits, demons and devils.

If it is not the Buddha's Warrior Attendant who pounds the punitive pestle on demons and devils, who else dares to unblock the greatest mechanism of opening and closing, returning to the traceless beauty disclosed for people by the sages of antiquity and celestial beings?

Out in the world, stand guard over your ruler and king; at home, protect your body and morality, relying on the true spirit of *Taiji*, in which sweetness and bitterness can be observed openly and fairly. This ancient system will make you a wonderful person and a peerless boxer.

First move left then right, but not just for the sake of maintaining the balanced state of 'motion and stillness', which resembles the game of Chinese draughts called *wei-qi*, where you can surround all the mountains and rivers by dividing the entire position into *yin* and *yang*[9].

In addition ot Bai-hui, seven acupoints on the foot are involved in the posture's performance:

- Bai-hui located at the top of the head;
- Yin-bai on the big toe;
- Da-dun on the second toe;
- Li-dui on the third toe;
- Qiao-yin on the fourth toe;
- Zhi-yin on the little toe;
- Tong-gu and Da-zhong on the outside of foot.

[8] The 'beautiful brocade' refers to Taiji boxing, while the 'bunches of flowers' refer to the blossoming and deepening of one's boxing technique and knowledge.
[9] Here, *yin* and *yang* refer to male and female components.

Posture 2

HOLDING ONE LAP PULL ON THE ROBE

Lan Zha Yi

All organs and parts are integrated due to the equal distribution *jin* force throughout the body. Bones and joints are positioned correctly to work in concert with the movements of the hands and feet. Each posture can be divided into the main or Host and secondary or Guest parts. For this posture, the right hand and right foot play the role of the Host while left hand and left foot are Guests. Each movement is guided by the mind/heart in the center of chest. If you are overly anxious of your movements, that is, take things 'too much to heart', you will lose your stability and firmness of stance; yet if you are not fully conscious of your movements, you will lose smoothness of flow. This is the state of equilibrium between the presence and absence of heart, the presence and absence of mind. Once this state is dominant and plays the part of Host, you will be on your way to attaining the Gold Mean, from which all movements without exception are based.

1. Diagram of the posture

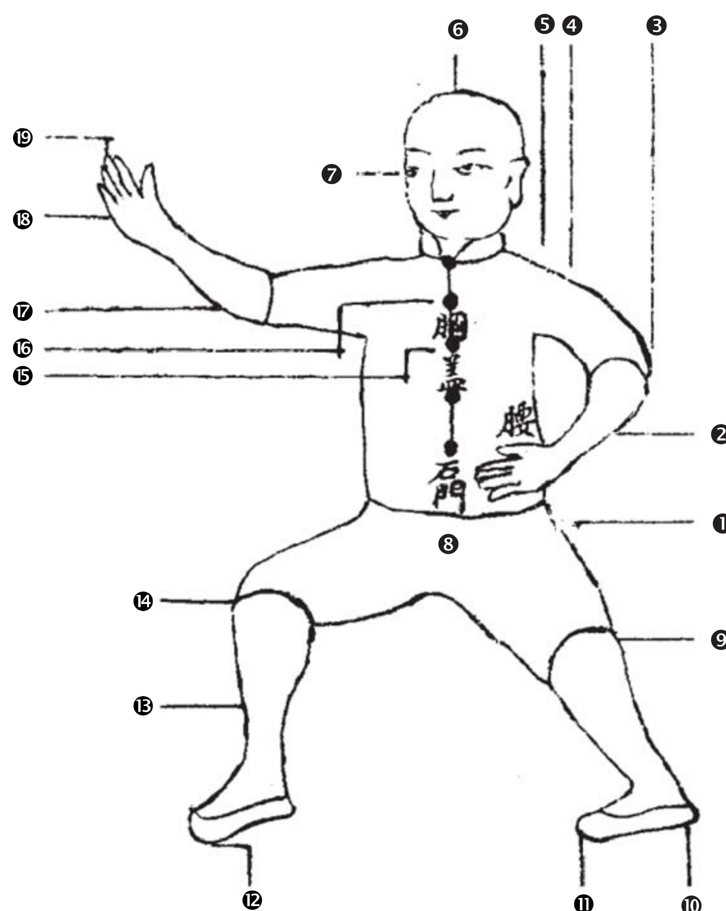


Fig. 1.2.1 Holding One Hand Pull on the Robe (Lan Zha Yi)

Inscriptions:

❶ tuck the buttocks in and place the crotch slightly forward;

❷ the waist works as an axis to regulate the positions of the upper and lower body, keeping them not too loose or stiff so that they can function properly;

❸ the elbow is angular outside and round inside; place the left elbow tip slightly forward to connect with the *jin* force; do not place it behind the torso otherwise the spirit will not be engaged;

❹ let the shoulder hang down, never lifting it;

❺ hold the neck upright but don't let it be stiff;

❻ hold the crown of the head upright to allow *jin* force to rise to the top; do not strain or tense your head, otherwise *qi* and blood cannot circulate smoothly; at the same time, your head should not be suspended too rigidly;

❼ look directly ahead and also at the tip of the middle finger; do not let your eyes wander or look at any other part of the body. The posture must be reflected in your heart and externally expressed in your eyes, which are the true receptacles of the spirit. Therefore focus your attention on the posture by looking at your leading right hand, the Host, while the left hand plays the role of Guest. When the right hand moves, the eyes follow the right hand forward until it comes to a rest. Then concentrate your attention on the middle fingertip of right hand. When the right hand comes to a rest, the five fingers make a gesture of strength to conclude the final movement of the posture. This means that even when the power producing movements come to a stop with the hand, the flow of *qi* still continues so that it flows onto the succeeding postures. Continuous interaction of heaven and earth, *yin* and *yang*, makes both the *yin* and *yang qi* run without interruption. Hence the stronger the *qi* flow, the firmer it becomes.Once the posture overflows with *qi*, it is released through opening into the succeeding posture, thus allowing old *yang* to give birth to young *yin* in turn;

❽ chest; acupoint Hua-gai; acupoint Shi-men; waist; buttocks; the crotch must be rounded-in to provide a stable stance;

❾ the left leg is bent at the knee but not loose;

❿ the left heel digs into the ground;

⓫ the left toes are placed firmly using strength, otherwise the upper body will be unsteady;

⓬ take a bow[10] step with the right foot to 1 *chi* and 5-6 *cun* so that toes of the rear left foot turn slightly in to form the Chinese character for 'eight' (八), while the front right foot stabilizes the stance; dig the right toes into the ground;

⓭ equally load right and left shanks;

⓮ the right and left knees are filled with energy so that the intrinsic *jin* force of the front right leg is sustained while the *jin* force of the back left knee is pressed down;

⓯ the area between Hua-gai and Shi-men[11] must be empty, that tis, the area should be free from *Heng-qi*[12];

⓰ the chest area must be relaxed and open to make the whole body free from tension, as the saying states, "one should not be with the senses, one should not be without them";

⓱ sink the tip of the right elbow downward and angle it slightly outward in line with the left elbow, so keeping the *jin* force of both arms linked up;

⓲ the right edge[13] of the right palm faces forward;

⓳ the right hand first draws a semi-circle, moving from its initial position in front of the right ribs upwards to nose level and to the right; extend the right arm while keeping it slightly bent at the elbow to align with the left elbow; the middle finger of the right hand plays the role of Host to connect with the *jin* force of the left arm.

[10] This means that the front leg is bent at the knee while the rear leg is extended (but not completely).

[11] from the upper chest to the lower abdomen.

[12] Heng-qi or over-crossed energy refers to energy stuck in the chest area which is about to burst out.

[13] The right edge of the palm refers to the side of the little finger.

2. *Diagrams of the path of jin force*

a) Diagram of the path of intrinsic jin force from beginning to end

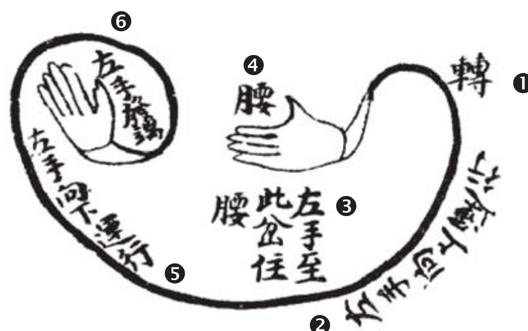


Fig. 1.2.2 Diagram of the path of intrinsic jin force from beginning to end

Inscriptions:

- ❶ turn;
- ❷ the left hand moves upward;
- ❸ the left hand stops at waist level;
- ❹ waist;
- ❺ the left hand moves downward;
- ❻ start of left hand's motion.

This figure implies the student is facing north. The left hand is the west. The right hand starts to move first, while the left hand follows the right hand and draws a small circle, then moves upward in a big circle until it stops at the left side, grasping the waist from the left. Since most people are more comfortable using the right hand than the left, the left hand generally moves a little more awkwardly that the right. Notwithstanding this, in boxing practice, the left hand should move synchronously with the right hand to maintain continuity of the spirit. The spirit needs both hands to move together in circles to keep *qi* and strength distributed equally throughout the body.

b) Jin force along the right arm

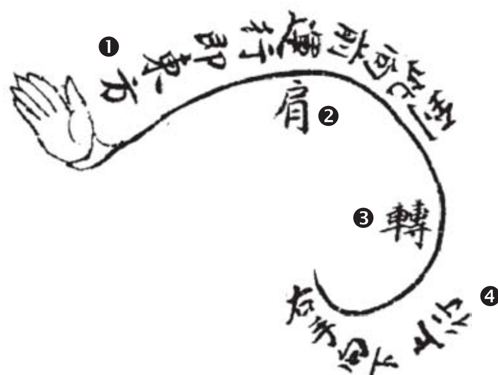


Fig. 1.2.3 Jin force along the right arm

Inscriptions:

1. first move northward, then turn to the east;
2. shoulder;
3. turn;
4. the right hand moves downward and upward.

The right arm with elbow slightly bent, resembles a newborn moon. Utilize the silk-reeling method to coil *jin* force along the arm between the bones and skin. The way of motion for the right hand and right foot is the same. The other three limbs — right arm, right leg, left arm — are in motion, while the left leg remains immovable.

c) Position of the left arm



Fig. 1.2.4 Position of the left arm

Sink the left shoulder down with the elbow hanging loosely and slightly turned out. The back of the hand faces up, its four fingers pointing forward and sitting on the left ribs, while the thumb sits at the waist, pointing backward.

d) Diagram of jin force in the right hand during its final movement

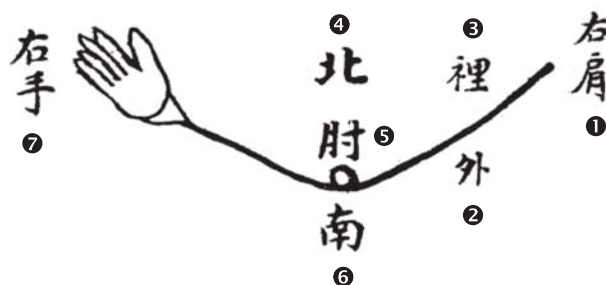


Fig. 1.2.5 Diagram of jin force in the right hand during its final movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the right shoulder;
- ❷ inside;
- ❸ outside;
- ❹ north;
- ❺ elbow;
- ❻ south;
- ❼ the right hand.

The middle finger of the right hand is the Host, while the other four digits are close together. The elbow tip faces south, the arm bent at the elbow. The intrinsic *jin* force seems to be moving but is at the same time immovable. The leading middle finger keeps the other four digits close together to establish a closer connection with the *jin* force of the right shoulder and a more distant connection with the *jin* force of the left hand. The right shoulder and right arm move slightly inward to collect the flowing *jin* force.

e) Positions of the right foot

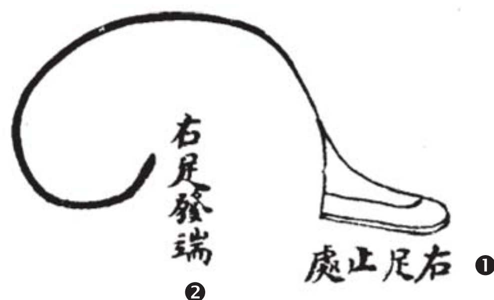


Fig. 1.2.6 Positions of the right foot

Inscriptions:

- ❶ initial position of right foot;
- ❷ final position of right foot.

The right foot follows the right hand's motion; the right toes draw a small circle first.

The current posture is called *Lan Zha Yi* where *Lan* means 'holding something in one's hand'; *Zha* can be interpreted as 'putting one's hand into something'; and *Yi* is a robe or cloth. All three characters depict a man who, while holding one fold of his robe in his left hand, puts his right arm into the right sleeve of the robe. The left hand grasps the waist from the left side in a fork[14] gesture, the elbow moving slightly forward, the left thumb facing backward while the other four fingers lie on the left ribs pointing forward.

The left hand is pressed slightly down. The left arm is allocated to *yang* and the bent elbow is associated with *yin,* thus implying that *yin* contains a portion of *yang* within it. The right arm moves in a circle to the right and then left, turn returning slowly to the right again until it stops in front at about nose level, but not lower than the shoulders. The movement should be very slow, in fact, the slower the better, in order to collect *jin* force as it

[14] 'Fork' refers to resting the hand at the waist such that the fingers sit at the front while the thumb rests behind the back.

flows in the middle back and forth. The midway position of the *jin* force means that the middle finger of the right hand plays the role of Host.

Once *jin* force takes the midway position, the other fingers will also be filled with *jin* force originating from the bottom of the mind/heart. This second *jin* force flows from the nipple and runs up through the armpit to the shoulder, then flows inside the ulna[15] before emerging out onto the skin. Again, the arm movement should be done slowly to supply intrinsic force to the finger. Since this reverse rotation connects the hand with the forearm, the forearm with the elbow, the elbow with the shoulder, the shoulder with the knee and the knee with the foot, this ultimately leads to the connection of the upper and lower body, which we will discuss later.

Thus, through integration of the upper and lower body, the *jin* force of the crotch becomes opened. Total opening must go through the stages of intergration, concentration and closing to release unopened[16] *jin* force outward. This act of 'opening the closing' equates to what is known as the 'closing of opening' and makes up the two halves of the intrinsic force: the right hand and right foot form one circle, thereby implying the synchronized motions of the right arm and right leg linked together. When the right hand stops its motion, the right heel is lowered slowly flat on the ground until all five toes dig into the ground. The right foot positions itself into the shape of one half of the Chinese character for 'eight', toes turning slightly inward. Positioned in front, the right foot leads in the role of Host, and is positioned inside of the Guest; conversely, the rear left foot plays the role of Guest, and is placed within the Host to find a balance between the motionless feet.

Thus the front right leg and foot become empty, while the rear left leg and foot turn solid. Stamp the toes and soles on the ground so that the toes dig into the ground properly and the Yong-quan acupoint, located in the center of the front part of the sole, can be emptied. While doing this, do not use exert downward pressure from your body weight.

[15] elbow bone.
[16] in the sense of 'unreleased'.

The *jin* force of the front leg ascends, starting from the big toe and spiraling on the external side of the ankle into the shank, then outward again, passing through acupoints Zu-san-li and Xue-hai, the latter being above the knee toward the crotch. The *jin* force of the back left leg spirals up in the same manner to reach acupoint Hui-yin, the origin of both thighs. Hui-yin is the midpoint between the genitals and anus, the place where the two lines of intrinsic *jin* force connect and cease their separate flows to return to the waist as the waist's intrinsic force.

To let *jin* force pass through acupoint Hui-yin, you need to slightly lower the body to open the crotch and round it in so that *jin* force flows to the empty waist unhindered. Once the waist is empty, the upper and lower body can move with agility. To use spiral-like coiling along arms and legs[17] all the limbs should not be completely extended but remain slightly bent in the elbows and knees to perform the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration. If, however, the four limbs are completely stretched, the reeling effect will not work at all as there will be no room to move between the bending and stretching. This will result in the posture becoming angular and blocked, preventing you from following the mechanism of changes during sparring. All marvels possible in boxing manifest in the agile movements and highly coordinated turns of a fully connected body. First, you must be highly sensitive to the movements of the opponent. The way to win is to activate one's own solid *qi* to conquer the opponent. Once you act from within, relying on your mind/heart, you will become a peerless boxer.

From hereonin, we will now try to describe in full detail the mechanism of reeling, which forms the core of *gong-fu* development. If students do not apply their *gong-fu* with this new knowledge, understanding the essence of *gong-fu* will become a problem. So I will not hesitate to re-iterate what must be assimilated and memorized forever in the heart through silent contemplation.

[17] In other words, to reel *jin* force ceaselessly.

By applying the silk-reeling method outward on the shoulder, *jin* force flows toward the middle fingertip and coils inward through the back of the hand to return to the shoulder. Such an operation is called 'attract *jin* force from far to make it be closer.' To exert *jin* force outward we advance; to return it to the shoulder we retreat. When we lower the body downward, *jin* force of the leg starts to move up from the toes until it reaches the crotch. The advance and retreat of *jin* force along the arms and legs are naturally different. Use your *gong-fu* to determine when to move and when not to. In real combat or sparring, when the opponent attacks you with an open palm or fist, you must first attract him to come closer so that you can counterattack within the parameters of that particular situation and your level of *gong-fu*. In fact, there is no other way to pre-determine the moment of your counterattack. The only thing you should remember is that the moment your right hand reaches ninety percent of its target, it should stop just before its destination, and your *qi* and *shen* must be applied one hundred percent. This is a most difficult point to describe with words. From initial launch to the moment where the right hand stops, the motion must be very slow (in fact, the slower the better) to control the flow of force, which is one hundred percent dependent on your level of *gong-fu*. Once you have total control over this process, the odds of defeating the opponent are optimal. At the same time, your ability to detect and respond to changes make you invulnerable.

In the beginning, it is difficult to realize and accept that the hardest way of mastering one's *gong-fu* is the most effective one. The whole body first bends to deflect the opponent's attack but then returns to an upright stance[18] to perform an oblique form so that the internal *jing* essence rising directly from the bottom of the heart[19] can flow to all four extremities. This process remains invisible to others and only you will know the way to arrange the precise moment for counterattack through the course of long practice. The spirit requires long-term cultivation before it can enable your hands and legs to move together as one. Once this happens, it means that your

[18] That is, outwardly slanting but inwardly straight.
[19] Also known as Zhong-qi which is generated from the mind/heart.

spirit has become concentrated and condensed. Conversely, if your movements are dispersed and scattered, this means your spirit remains diluted and thin.

Commands from the mind/heart to the organs and bodily structures need to take the motions of the hands and feet carefully into account. Correct movement of the hands require proper positioning of the shoulders, with the elbows hung loosely down. When the right hand moves forward, the left hand makes a half-loose gesture, arm bent at the elbow. This is the most common posture. Eyes, as the expression of the spirit, follow the right hand until it stops just ahead of the final move. From this moment, all attention is focused on the right middle fingertip. Your eyes thus occupied, you re-adjust the positions of the shoulder, elbow and forearm so that they are 'stitched' tightly together to all their interconnecting chain to 'open' properly. In other words, this opening of all parts of the arm should not arise from strength but from application of *gong-fu*. If your level of *gong-fu* is insufficient to achieve this opening naturally, your mind/heart will command you to "Just open it now!" To follow this command through naturally, however, takes long practice. Only a natural opening is considered the proper technique. When done properly, the arm motions of coming and going, flexing and extending, will be like a fresh gust of wind in the willows — its natural turbulence will reduce all obstacles to nothing.

The whole system works like this: use your forearm as a pivot to accelerate the agility of motion which is blocked. Remember that the right hand must be at shoulder level, neither higher nor lower, otherwise *Zhong-qi* flow will never reach the highest point of the hand's position without using strength. In other words, the whole point is to reach the state of the Golden Mean through stimulating *jing* essence rising from the depths of the heart in the center of the chest to acupoint Bai-hui at the top of the head. This keeps the whole body's spirit firmly upright, without any deviation sideways. This is why you should not place the right hand too high nor too low, otherwise it will lead to an unstable stance. This position prepares for the proper flow of *Zhong-qi* along the main pathway, which runs from

Bai-hui at the top of the head down through the twenty vertebrae. This is the main thoroughfare of *qi* flow through the whole body, which travels up and down the spine without any deviations sideways. This pathway allows *Zhong-qi* to flow between muscles and spaces toward the twenty-first vertebra, which is the point of intersection between the two main channels, Ren-mai in the front and Du-mai at the back. Understanding this is difficult because the flow of *Zhong-qi* is difficult to discern, shapeless and soundless as it is. Once you understanding this, you will grasp the complex meaning of *qi* allocated to *Zhong-qi*. This knowledge cannot be attained without long and intensive cultivation of *gong-fu*.

Therefore remember the principle of *Zhong-qi*: undeflected, shapeless and traceless, *Zhong-qi* attains the middle disposition by itself, flowing into all four limbs to run as the true *Zhong-qi*, no matter posture or position of the body. *Zhong-qi* behaves according to its true nature, unchanging, flowing throughout the body, no matter how many changes in position take place in different parts of the body at different levels.

Running through the supporting part of the body, it must remain undeflected and upright to enter the spiritual level. To be bright and clear at this level, your stance must be correct and upright, like a boulder in the middle of a river, not bending forward nor backward, left nor right, playing an indispensable role in maintaing a stable position so that *qi* does not fall over. The right hand's move to the right forms the main defense against the opponent's attack. Since the right arm is associated with *yin*, its movement also has *yin* nature with *yang* substance hidden within. As long as the left arm is bent at the elbow with the left leg standing steadfast, the right arm plays the role of Guest with the Host substance hidden within it to maintain the whole body's foundation. The left arm is associated with *yang*, so its motion has a *yang* nature with *yin* substance hidden within it to play the part of Host. Note that the Host's part is allocated to *yin* while the Guest's to *yang*.

In terms of *yin-yang* doctrine, *yin* and *yang* form the joint source which cannot be divided. The right arm, as part of the right side of the body which corresponds theoretically to *yin*, has *jin* force which reels outward from the

right shoulder to the middle fingertip, then re-coils inward. At first, *yin* and *yang* seem to be associated with two different intrinsic forces, but in fact, the simultaneous expression of the growth and decline technique of the posture demonstrates the wonder of *yin-yang*'s one indivisible source. When applied to combat, this means that when the opponent punches, attract his hand with your hand, that is, use the attracting technique as a counterattack. This strategy is a good example of how the joint origins of *yin* and *yang* can be exploited with great effectiveness.

The way of *Taijiquan* is to advance and retreat alternately to make *qi* and *shen* penetrate the body continuously. Imagine a fight between two players where one decides to stop fighting before the end. This would interrupt *qi* flow between the two and disperse the entire spirit of the combat. The player will find himself as if still riding a tiger in motion, risking defeat and annihilation by the momentum of continuing motion. Conversely, if a player rushes to attack the opponent thoughtlessly, he will put himself at a disadvantage since he has not carefully prepared the moves for victory. This preparation requires careful analysis of the opponent's *jin* force flowing into one's own, knowledge of all the possible maneuvers, as well as constant awareness of the spiritual conditions of both the opponent and himself while both are locked in a closed energy circuit. Without obtaining as much information about the opponent's condition as possible before rushing into a fight, the chances of defeat increase significantly, no matter how forceful and unremitting your attack. Ultimately, if this process of preparation is not set deeply into your mind/heart, no victory is possible. Silent in nature, this preparation allows you to fight till the end and return to the beginning, recovering broken bones[20] and joints so that energy can flow uninterrupted through the channels in full accordance with one's mind[21].

Thus the blood system circulates without interruption, uniting *qi* and *shen* and building the spiritual basis of the whole posture. Overflow of *shen* will

[20] Jin force is stored in the bones.
[21] intention.

then be transmitted to the succeeding posture as a supplement, continuing in this manner for all subsequent postures, until it ultimately refines and establishes the whole structure of the *Taiji* routine. In this way, this flood of energy serves to reset all breaks, equalize all disproportions and smooth out connections between the postures.

However, not only must the postures be connected, but also the movements of *shen* and *qi*, which must pass through all the postures from beginning to end as a single red spiritual line, the pulse and temper of the entire routine. If this spiritual line breaks, the succeeding posture will be disconnected from its predecessor like a chopped bamboo. The importance of maintaining connections between postures cannot be over-emphasized, hence its re-iteration here.

3. *Indicative reverse motions performed by the left hand in a circle*

The left hand's movement, a circle performed in reverse or backward direction, is shared by other postures such as: *Lan Zha Yi, Lou-xi Ao-bu, Chu-shou, Zai-shou, Pi-shen Chui, Zhou-di Kan Quan, Zhi Dang Chui* and *Xia-bu Kua Hu*.

In other postures, such as *Chu-shou, Zai-shou* and *Zhou-di Kan Quan*, the left hand moves up to draw a circle in a slightly different way from that of *Lan Zha Yi*. In *Lan Zha Yi*, the left hand is placed at the center of the left ribs in a form of a 'dove tail' to produce the reverse rotation in a circle — quite a complicated movement to execute properly. In *Zhi Dang Chui*, the circular movement of the left hand is quite small; in *Xia-bu Kua Hu* the circular movement is very similar to that of *Lan Zha Yi*. The silk-reeling technique of energy regeneration is quite difficult to complete when performed in reverse circular rotaion. In comparison with the right hand's movement, which is easier to do naturally, the left hand's reverse rotation has the leading role and is used to stimulate the movement of both hands. Diagrams have been provided for this posture to help ensure that left-hand practice remains coherent with the movements of the right hand.

4. Symbolic meaning of the posture

In the *Lan Zha Yi* posture, *yang* is associated with the left and stretching movements, while *yin* is associated with the right and bending movements. Yang is also associated with the internal, the strong and healthy; while the compliant and the external is associated with *yin*.

Therefore harmony in this posture comes from the right hand moving in a small circle, followed by the left hand which moves down from its elevated position to the left, then up and right, then down again to finally rest at the waist in a fork-hand. This creates a form at the waist that is 'round outside and angular inside', the image of a dragon deeply hidden and passively waiting. The left hand is associated with the image of peace and tranquility, which will change into one of activity once it reaches its peak. Therefore according to the doctrine of the natural development, it is said that the left hand will restore its function within a seven day cycle. The right leg follows the right arm, while the left leg retains its stable and rooted position.

5. Four-character a line verses dedicated to the posture

The *yin* and *yang* doctrine indicates the image
That works in accord with the Law;
Bending is allocated to *yin*,
While stretching to *yang*.

Yin and *yang* employ each other,
The way of heaven is to store them both;
Motion and stillness have no partiality,
So they are both strong as usual.

6. Seven-character line verse dedicated to the posture

Ordinary people don't know the meaning of *Lan Zha Yi*:
The left arm is bent, the right arm stretched
to shake with a tiger's vigor.

Bending in the middle of extending —
who is able to understand that?
Extending lies within bending —
those who know about that are few.

The rounded crotch divides the thighs
into two lofty towers, each like a long sword;
The head is crowned, as if with a spherical shield[22].
A myriad changes and a thousand transformations
occur once you move;
Sink the body down — your legs are stable like roots.

[22] another name for *Zhong-qi*.

Posture 3

SINGLE WHIP

Dan Bian

The left hand connects energetically with the right hand to act as a single unit.

1. Diagram of the posture

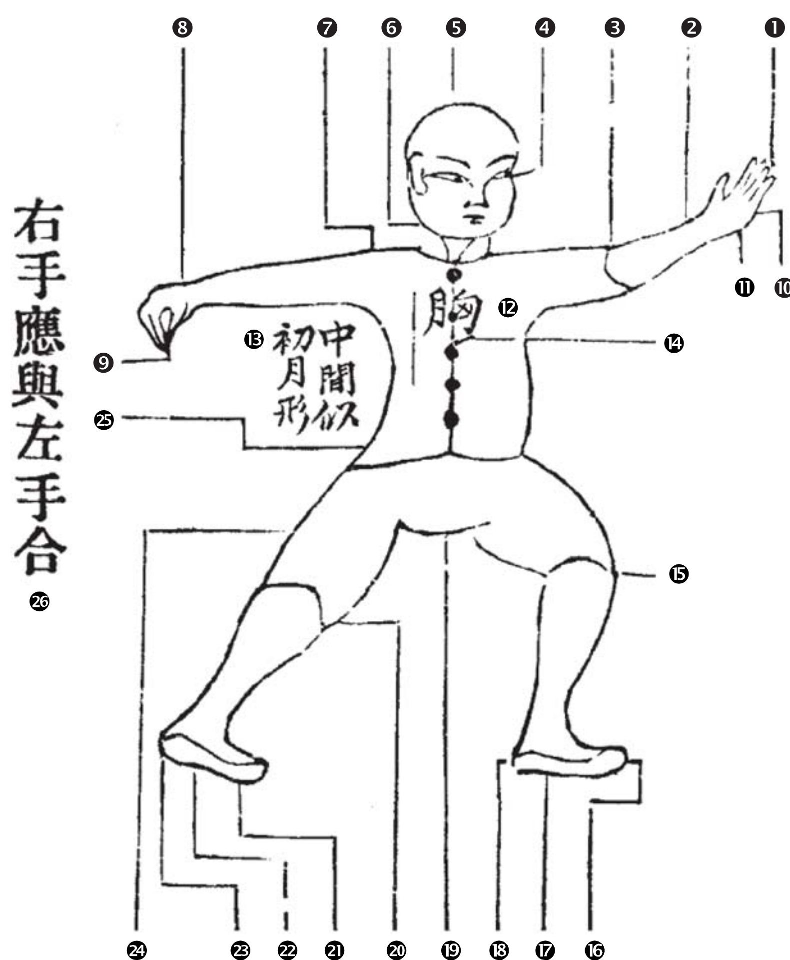


Fig. 1.3.1 Single Whip (Dan Bian)

Inscriptions above the figure:

❶ the five fingers move using strength;

❷ the left wrist should not be loose;

❸ the arc inside the elbow is like a newborn moon or a drawn bow;

❹ focus your attention and look at the middle finger of the left hand;

❺ *jin* force is focused at the top of the head;

❻ hold the neck upright;

❼ the front left shoulder and back right shoulder are sunk down; never lift the shoulders;

❽ do not lose your connection with the right wrist;

❾ bunch the fingertips of the right hand and turn them downward at the wrist to form a 'hook hand' just before the left hand moves forward.

Inscriptions in the figure:

❿ draw strength to the outside edge of the palm;

⓫ draw strength to the thumb edge of the left hand;

⓬ chest;

⓭ the right arm forms an arc with the torso in the shape of a newborn moon.

Inscriptions below the figure:

⓮ overcrossed *qi* in chest flows down to the foot; if it cannot reach down deeply enough, it sinks into the DAN-TIAN;

⓯ the knee of the front leg moves about 3 cm forward, but it should not go past the toes;

⓰ all five toes of the left foot dig firmly into the ground, especially the big toe;

⓱ the left foot is slightly emptier than the right foot;

⓲ first place the left heel on the ground, flatten the foot down slowly; at the same time, shift the body weight onto the toes;

⓳ round-in the crotch to make it empty and place it slightly forward naturally;

⓴ place the right knee 1.5 cm forward; do not lose your connection with it;

㉑ the right foot faces slightly northwest in a hooked position;

22. press the right sole down in the area of acupoint Yong-quan;
23. place the right heel on the ground, pressing downwards with strength to stabilize the stance; the right foot should be solid in keeping with the statement, 'the front is empty, the back is solid';
24. turn both thighs slightly inward to 'wrap' the crotch from both sides;
25. slightly upturn the buttocks to support the lower abdomen and the natural position of the crotch;
26. the right hand forms an energy connection with the left hand.

The intrinsic force is focused at the crown of the head and is associated with *Zhong-qi*. Alternatively, it may be stored in the mind/heart as *Zheng-qi*. Once *Zhong-qi* flows up to the crown, it activates and stimulates all spiritual substances existing in the body.

In the martial arts, the mind/heart is considered to be the Host. The spine is the dividing line that splits the body into left and right halves and can be compared to a pivot. The waist is the boundary which divides the body into upper and lower halves: upper *qi* moves upward while lower *qi* moves downward to divide the entire posture into upper and lower parts. The solid *qi* of a posture flows throughout the body but does not interfere with the management of the limbs, where the left arm leads the left leg and the right arm leads the right leg respectively. The movement of both legs are determined by the movement of the arms, so do not let the body rise and fall abruptly. Upward and downward movements are performed synchronously by the legs and arms to make *Taiji* postures look natural and coherent as a single form.

Both hands, including palms and fingers, determine the movement of the whole body. Legs and feet follow the motion of the hands. This is a very important point. *Zhong-qi* should flow slowly and smoothly along the arms, never rushing nor in a flurry. Do not let the body bend sideways but move heart *qi* into the arms to be revealed as true *Zhong-qi*. The back of the left hand faces obliquely south while the back of the right hand faces

north. Once *Zhong-qi* reaches the fingers of both hands, the arms start to be equally filled with *qi*. Both hands and arms are held at the same level.

Usually, there is no need to orientate one's body initially in the cardinal directions when practicing *Taijiquan*. However, since the Big Dipper, also known as the House of the Creator, corresponds to north, the practitioner should respectfully face directly northward in his initial position. Hence all diagrams presented here are oriented north, the back facing south, the east to the right and the west to the left.

2. *Movements of the left and right arms*

All diagrams for this posture face north, with the right hand holding the leading position.

The Single Whip posture demands complete coordination of the left and right arms. The upper and lower body are linked together. The fingers of the left hand are slightly bent, and the forearm rests in a comfortable position. The left hand then draws a circle westward, coming to rest at a natural point with the forearm.

a) Movements of the left hand

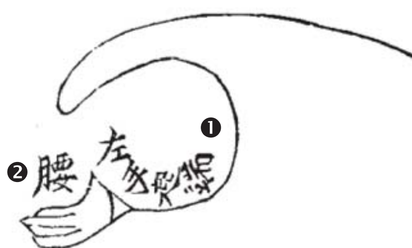


Fig. 1.3.2 Movements of the left hand

Inscriptions:

- ❶ hold the left hand in a forked-hand[23] gesture;
- ❷ waist.

[23] This generally means separating the thumb from the fingers when the hand rests at the waist.

Upon leaving its position at the waist, the left hand moves upwards to the right. This is not the principle motion but the preliminary circular movement toward the right hand.

b) Movements of the right hand



Fig. 1.3.3 Movements of the right hand

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the right fingers point upward;
- ❷ the path of the right hand's movement;
- ❸ the final position of the right hand.

This is the *jin* force of the arm. The right hand draws a full circle, with the back of the right hand facing obliquely forward.

c) Movements of both arms

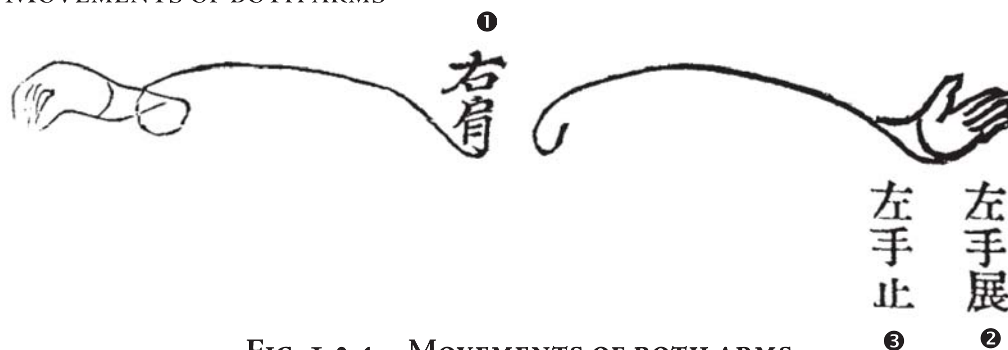


Fig. 1.3.4 Movements of both arms

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left arm is stretched out;
- ❷ the left hand's stops here;
- ❸ the right shoulder.

This diagram depicts the movement of the left hand which still faces north. Therefore the movemenets of the left and right arms are similar to those depicted in Figures 1.3.2 and 1.3.3. The left arm is bent and fully coordinated with the position of the right arm. The left hand rises, passing in front of the torso[24] from acupoint Tian-tu and Yin-jiao through to Qi-hai, Shi-men and Guan-yuan, all aligned below the navel in the shape of a drawn bow. This is called the 'contained chest,' meaning that the chest must be empty to contain *jin* force.

At the same time, the right arm assumes a hooked position to balance against the left hand's position. The circular motion loops inward to signal the start of the right hand's motion. The right hand draws a small circle prior to its hook hand gesture.

3. *Diagram of jin force in the leg generated through the silk-reeling method*

The intrinsic force of the legs starts to coil upward, reeling in an inward direction from the feet to the crotch. When the coils of force reach the crotch, the *jin* force of both legs pumps up independently from solid *qi*. Both knees and toes are turned slightly inward, the upper and lower parts of the legs move naturally in synchronicity, and the crotch is open and tucked in.

a) Step practice

Place the left leg forward. Draw the right foot beside the left foot, the right toes touching the ground in preparation for the next step about 1 chi and 5-6 *cun*[25] westward.

[24] That is, the chest and abdomen.
[25] about 65 cm.

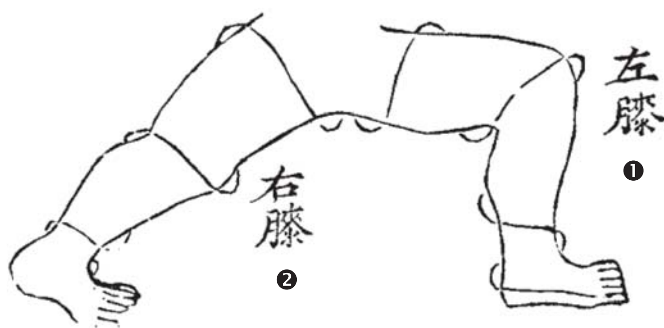


Fig. 1.3.5 Method of keeping left and right thighs together

Inscriptions:

❶ left knee;

❷ right knee.

b) Technique of re-adjusting the position of heel

In the Single Whip posture, the left toes are placed on the ground near the right toes, then a step is taken westward. In the *Lan Zha Yi* posture, the toes face northeast and left foot steps westward. After placing the left heel on the ground, the toes turn northwest to flatten slowly on ground. Before the left sole is placed fully flat on the ground, the right toes turn northeast without moving the foot, while the right heel is slightly re-adjusted in a northwestly direction. Hence the position of the right toes is re-adjusted while the left toes dig into the ground when the left heel sets on the ground. Flatten the left sole slowly until the toes settle into a stable position. At the same time, the right foot re-adjusts its position to ensure the intrinsic forces of both legs are linked together.

The name 'Single Whip' derives from the position of the arms: the left hand is generally placed leftward while the right arm is placed in front and slightly alongside the right ribs at shoulder level. The word 'single' comes from the fact that while both arms are stretched out, only one hand is activated.

The word 'whip' means 'pain and punishment'. For this position, the arms are stretched in a form of a whip, that is, the left hand assumes the leading role and is placed at the level of the navel by drawing a small turn outward, the palm facing up. The right hand moves forward in a semi-circle. Both hands move in a synchronized fashion, their *shen* and *qi* echoing each other like two people talking face-to-face, breath to breath.

Next, the leading left arm moves left, causing the body to follow suit, taking a half-turn in the same direction though at a slightly higher plane and westward, moving in a very slow and gentle fashion. When the body turn is eighty to ninety percent complete, turn your eyes to the left hand; and as the body comes to a final rest, gently focus your attention on the middle fingertip of the left hand, taking care not to re-adjust your gaze too abruptly.

Zhong-qi reels in the way it is used in the *Lan Zha Yi* posture: right hand and right forearm are coordinated in one single motion, while left foot is first balled[26] beside right foot to take then a step leftward in parallel to the movement of left hand in the same direction, i.e. westward. When left hand stops facing inward, left foot heels in the ground to flat it slowly on floor until left big toe digs in the ground synchronously with left hand stopping in the final motion (although the motion is stopped, the spirit doesn't discontinued).

Zhong-qi reels in the same way as in the *Lan Zha Yi* posture: the right hand and forearm move in a coordinated manner, while the left foot, initially balled beside the right foot, moves one step left in the same direction as the left hand which also moves west. At the same time, the right hand moves and the body sinks down slightly onto the supporting right leg. The size of the step depends on the practitioner's height, but it should not be wider than 2 chi[27]. When the left hand stops facing inward, slowly flatten the left foot on the ground until the left big toe digs into the ground at the same

[26] A 'balled' foot is one in which the toes touch the ground.
[27] about 65 cm.

time as the left hand comes to rest in its final movement. Note that even while physical movement ceases, the movement of the spirit continues.

The right hand first arcs backward as the left hand moves westward, then it moves forward to the east. While this happens, the right forearm moves in front of the left palm to gather *jin* force at the back of the right hand, whose fingers point obliquely up. Then the left hand moves westward leaving the right hand behind, as if parting from each other. However, both hands retain their spiritual link in an invisible arc until the left hand stops in its final position. At this point, the right arm forms a hook hand, its five fingers pointing downward from the wrist like a whip's handle. When this takes place, take care to direct your gaze straight ahead and not at the hook hand. *Jin* force flows in a coiling path along both arms back and forth to reach the right fingers, stopping finally at the right fingertips.

Meanwhile, the supporting right leg doesn't move until the right hand takes its final northeastly position, the right toes pointing in the same direction. In the final movement, the right foot re-adjusts its position by turning its toes inward to face northwest (actually, much more northward than westward). The upper and lower parts of the right supporting half of the body should be well coordinated and moved like a solid unit, four fifths of which is solid and only one fifth soft. The arms, elbows and shoulders are almost parallel with each other and move synchronously sideways while the central part of the body rotates like an upright pivot. Due to the relaxed state of the joints and tendons, both arms become open to allow the mainstream of *jin* force to flow from the dropped down shoulders toward the hands positioned at shoulder level. The external softness is actually supported with proper firmness of spirit hidden deep inside, to be displayed externally only at the proper time.

Individual practice of *Taiji* boxing is integral to mastering the technique. However, it is quite difficult to practice alone especially at the initial stages, due mainly to inexperience. Hence one shouldn't anticipate great results from practice, as this can provoke improper thoughts within one's chest which can harm one's boxing skills in the future. The main point is to con-

duct oneself naturally and spontaneously in accord with each particular situation.

Since nobody can foresee the time or place of an attack, nor its style or manner, one must respond naturally and spontaneously without a second thought[28]. It is very important to develop true *Taiji* thinking and adequate reaction. Until you are involved in a fight, how can you know the way and direction of the aggressor? How can you know which part of your body the opponent plans to defeat first? This is a very difficult task even for advanced practitioners. However, by means of attracting[29] and counterattack you will be able to handle the situation properly 'without rhyme or reason', as the saying goes, that is, spontaneously but effectively without any conscious thoughts. Those who do not know how to do this effectively ask: "How long must we practice to become successful?" The answer is, "For a lifetime."

Although a practitioner may remain at a mid-level of skill, unable to progress further despite a lifetime of practice, we can generally say that great progress may be made after approximately nine years of extensive practice. Seven years of hard practice may yield lesser progress, enough to refine *jing* essence and master its application for the rest of one's life. Those who practice less than two years and even for a few years will obtain only shallow experience. To stop your progress after several years of practice means to remain outside the gates, daring not to enter the true realm of *Taijiquan* mastery. To penetrate its core you must first start from within. Though you may not be able to classify and set in order what you learn through daily practice, you will gradually start to follow the infinite road of progress and self-cultivation in accord with the rules and principles. Without the latter there is no way to learn that the square is round but the round is square. Constancy is the most highly valued in this long-term process, and the most difficult for a practioner to fulfill alone.

[28] That is, to act with a 'single mind'.
[29] in the sense of 'luring'.

4. *Seven-character a line verse devoted to the Single Whip posture*

The Single Whip is an extremely powerful technique:
A long snake spread out from east to west.
When attacked at the head, the tail moves
To link jing essence and shen together;
When attacked at the tail, the head moves
To connect the Mai channels and Luo collaterals.
When attacked in the middle,
The head and tail move together: the upper and lower limbs
Smash one and all in the four corners, like the drawing of a bow.
If you ask me: "Where is the true source for all this?"
I would reply, "You must look for it carefully
Between the vertebrae of the spine."

5. *Free verse*

In the whole world there is not another whip like this:
It hits without haste to smash my opponents with the left hand,
Moving by waist and elbow, always bent, its blows deeply penetrating —
There is no way to protect the remote area until the western border.
Its mighty power is always kept a secret, by what means can I understand it?
Draw a bow and shoot — upon bending, it must be released.
There is no place beyond its reach;
Its resistance is like a natural calamity.
Its incredible technique is entirely based on the whole body:
Emptiness and agility are intertwined into one single thread —
Zhong-qi follows the posture: once it rises, the foe is afraid.
To gain victory and escape from defeat
Without measuring forces with the opponent
Means the profound ability to see short and long.
This is what is called 'yang exists within *yin*.'[30]

[30] The bent arm being *yin* while the out-stretched arm, *yang*.

6. Symbolic meaning of the posture

When practicing boxing, you have to be free from any attachment in the mind/heart. This means that your mind/heart should be clean and empty, so that everything that comes externally to you is empty as well. Being cultivated and well-versed inside, but gentle and yielding outside, you thus embody the *Li* (fire) figure, empty inside yet strong outside. Returning to Dan-tian, *qi* becomes refined solid *qi*, empty from above and below, but solid in-between in the image of the *Kan* (water) trigram. All four limbs are relaxed and opened, so enabling *Zhong-qi* to flow in smoothly and fill up the entire posture with *qi*.

The fully realized posture embodies the Tai (11) figure, its extreme manifestation a symbol of harmonious interaction between heaven and earth. If the posture overflows with *qi*, performing changes such as agile turns and smooth movements become problematic. This is represented by hexagram Pi (12), symbol of disintegration between heaven and earth. If the arms assume their final position, this posture cannot be considered as the position of a great man. Therefore *Zhong-qi* will find itself in the central place once the second moving divided line of Pi (12) converts into an undivided line, turning the lower trigram *Kun* (earth) into *Kan*. Through converting the fifth undivided line into a divided line, the upper trigram *Qian* (heaven) will turn into *Li*, its empty and agile core nourishing solid *qi*. Whilst an omen of disintegration and calamity, hexagram Pi's influence is essentially natural and benign, and does not portend an insatiable desire for inflicting deliberate harm. Notwithstanding, try to do all you can to avoid any manifestations of Pi (12) by performing the Four Virtues of martial arts in full.

The *Lan Zha Yi* and *Dan Bian* postures have the status of *Liang-yi*, whose interaction procreates *Si-xiang*. Thus *Taiji* gives birth to *Liang-yi*, which creates *Si-xiang*, ultimately giving rise to the ceaseless cycle of procreation of a myriad things.

To grasp subtle and complex knowledge, you need to rely on diligent mastering of *gong-fu*. Practice well, train your body conscientiously and culti-

vate morality over a long period to realize the true meaning of *Taijiquan* boxing. Are there words sufficient to explain the true meaning of this art? In fact, it can only be represented by the natural mechanism of motion propelled by *yin* and *yang*, which is the earthly embodiment of the doctrine of opening and closing. If a silk thread is strong solely for the sake of strength, it is far from what we call the natural pattern of *Taiji* and cannot be attributed to *Taijiquan*.

Posture 4

Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle

Jin-gang Dao Dui

This is the second *Jin-gang Dao Dui* performed in the *Taiji* routine under the order number 4.

1. Cardinal directions of the body

In the *Taiji* routine, this particular posture, as well as *Dan Bian, Xi-luo Ao-bu, Ye-ma Fen Zong, Juan Dao Gong* and *Shang-bu qi Xing Chui*, are oriented toward the four cardinal directions: east, west, south and north.



Fig. 1.4.1 Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle (Jin-gang Dao Dui)

2. Seven-character line verse dedicated to the posture

Face west, performing the posture a second time;
The torso first faces the northwest corner,
The upper and lower extremities move simultaneously;
The empty and solid are clearly recognized –
This is what you should keep in the mind.
Don't let the many details confuse you and obstruct the path.
The left side is empty, while the right is solid enough for
Bai E Liang Chi[31].
To set up the posture try to embody these descriptive names;
Do not disturb the union of *shen* and *qi*.
If shen and qi flow continuously,
Arteries and veins will function properly to circulate blood.

When performed for the first time, *Jin-gang Dao Dui* faces north. This time, do it facing west. The reason for this change in direction is because the preceding *Dan Bian* (Posture 3) comes to completion with the left arm pointing west and the right arm east, so releasing *Zhong-qi* out completely.

When taking a step in *Jin-gang Dao Dui*, stop as if not-stopping[32]. Look at the leading left hand and slightly above it while also being aware of the right hand and the area slightly below. Let both shoulders relax and hang down loosely. The left toes point north as in the preceding posture. To change the posture from a northerly to westerly direction both feet should not be positioned like the Chinese character 'eight.'

Now, lift the left toes and move them outward and westward, turn the left heel and so stimulating acupoint Da-zhong located beside the center of the heel. Once the left toes cross the invisible line pointing west, the left foot turns slightly inward before setting on the ground.

[31] The 'White Goose Reveals Its Wings' posture.
[32] Stop as if not stopping: this means that while your body stops moving, the internal movement of your mind never ceases to continue paying attention to all that is happening internally and externally.

At the same time, drop your left hand down in a circle, moving from outside in until it stops in front of the chest, palm down. Form a fist with your right hand and lift it up in likeness of a pounding action as if holding a pestle. While this occurs, turn the left hand outward and lower it to the level of the lower abdomen, palm up, so that it becomes a mortar to the right fist's pestle.

At the moment when the left heel turns and the left hand moves inward to the front of chest, move the right hand in a large circle downward and forward to the west, passing the right side of the body, palm obliquely forward, fingers pointing down. Then clench the right hand into a fist in the form of a pestle to stimulate the Lao-gong acupoint in the center of the left palm. When the left heel turns west, turn the torso in the same direction as well. Thus, the general direction you are facing changes from north to east.

With the exception of direction, all other movements in the *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture are generally identical to its first performance (Posture 1) in the *Taiji* routine. This first performance's symbolic development is limited by *Dan Bian* (Posture 3). Hence we perform *Jin-gang Dao Dui* repeatedly throughout the form to reverse the directions of successive sequences.

3. *Seven-character line verse dedicated to the posture*

The posture has been set up already;
Now it is repeated in a different way.
Previously, it faced northward,
This time the back is turned east.
From above, it is logically linked up to *Dan Bian*;
From below, it is followed by *Bai E Liang Chi*,
Which is all the more powerful.
Once you can grasp the body's re-orientation,
The spiritual mechanism of changes will be launched from hereon.

Posture 5

WHITE GOOSE REVEALS ITS WINGS

Bai E Liang Chi

1. Diagram of the posture

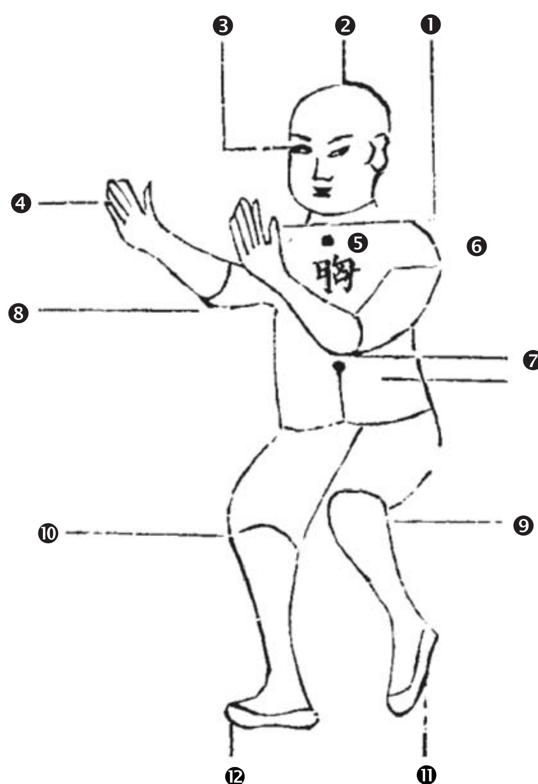


Fig. 1.5.1 White Goose Reveals Its Wings (Bai E Liang Chi)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left hand and left foot follow the leading right hand and move together in a big circle; the left foot follows the right foot, taking an empty step[33] about 8 to 10 cm beside the right foot; the distance between both palms is 1 *chi* and 2 *cun*[34];

[33] Empty step: this means that the main body weight is carried by the specified leg, in this case, the right leg.

[34] about 40 cm.

2. *Jin* force rise to the top of the head;
3. look at the right hand as it moves forward — don't look sideways;
4. the right hand leads takes the role of Host; as it moves in a big circle, the right foot takes a step right toward the north; this step does not exceed 1 *chi* and 4-5 *cun*[35];
5. chest;
6. the *jin* force of the chest follows the movement of the right and left hands; after the right hand completes its circular motion it comes to a rest below, while the left hand rests above;
7. the left elbow sinks down; the intrinsic force holds the waist;
8. the right elbow sinks down;
9. the left knee bends at 3-4 *cun*[36];
10. The right knee bends at 3-4 *cun;*
11. Before the left foot takes its final position, use the doctrine of the Golden Mean to adjust your position correctly. The movement must be done slowly until the left foot stamps on the ground, the left toes touching the earth 2-3 or 3-4 *cun*[37] from the right foot to form the final empty left step of the posture;
12. Step the right foot to the right, the heel touching the ground first. While flattening the right sole on the ground, move both hands in a circle.

White Goose Reveals its Wings consists of two halves: the first one is the beginning of *Lou-xi*[38] while the second half is the end of the same *Lou-xi*. Both parts complete the posture.

[35] about 50 cm.
[36] about 10 cm.
[37] about 10-12 cm.
[38] The 'Brush Knee' posture.

2. *Diagrams illustrating jin force attraction*

A) Movements of the left and right hands

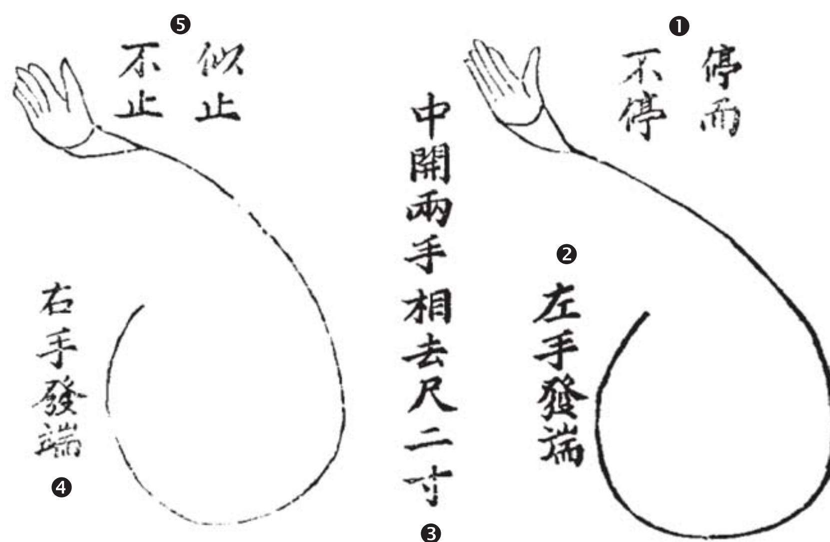


Fig. 1.5.2 Movements of the left and right hands

Inscriptions:

- ❶ stopping as though 'not stopping';
- ❷ start of the left hand's motion;
- ❸ distance between both palms is 1 *chi* and 2 *cun;*
- ❹ stopping as if not stopping;
- ❺ start of the right hand's motion.

The left hand follows the right until the latter stops;
Both hands lift up.
The right hand coils into a circle; the left hand moves in a circle too.
The right hand stops moving; the left hand follows suit,
Like a husband who joins his wife in song.
The right hand starts moving 7 to 8 *cun*[39] in front of the right nipple,
Going downward and left in a hold-ball gesture:

[39] about 20 cm.

The right palm goes under the left, then continues rightwards and up.
Meanwhile, the right foot takes a step right and slightly backwards;
The size of this step matching the synchronous movement
Of the upper and lower body. Therefore it is said,
'Both parts work in concert with each other.'

b) Qi flow in the heart

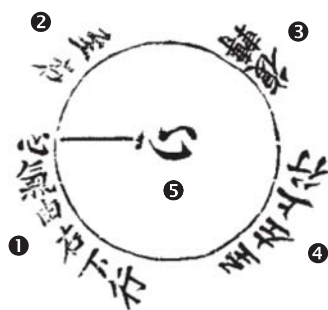


Fig. 1.5.3 Qi flow in the heart

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the heart *qi* flows rightward and down;
- ❷ until it reaches the right side;
- ❸ repeated turn;
- ❹ until it moves leftward and up;
- ❺ heart.

The horizontal line in the center of the circle
implies the union of *yin-yang* substances,
The essence of *Zhong-qi*. It starts from the right to flow downward
and left, then upwards and right,
until it stops at the level of the head on the right
To link *jin* force of the hand and the head together.
Look at the right hand as it moves up
to reach the Supreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*.
The entire flow is slow and uninterrupted,
contemplating the image of *jin* force circulation.
You can also feel and experience its flow through silent meditation.

3. *Diagrams of the steps of the feet*

a) Movement of the left foot



Fig. 1.5.4 Movement of the left foot

Inscription: start

In *Bai E Liang Chi*, the right hand is considered the leading hand or Host, while the left hand the Guest. The left foot, following the movement of the left hand, moves rightward toward the right foot, after which the right foot takes a step to the right. Next, the left foot draws an arc, placing its toes on the ground beside the right foot in a left empty step in its role as the 'assistant' — this means that while the hands can move synchronously, the feet cannot, and hence can only 'assist' each other.

a) Movement of the right foot



Fig. 1.5.5 Movement of the right foot

Inscription: start

As the right foot steps rightward toward the north, *jin* force of the right hand flows rightward too. The right foot then comes to a rest on the ground, toes pointing northwest.

4. Treatise on the posture's application

If the opponent grasps your right elbow, move it leftward under your left hand to release it from his grasp, then return it to its rightful position. This frees you to counterattack with your right hand. Simultaneously, move your left hand to the right to thwart the opponent's grasp, then to the left to counter-balance the right hand's attack to protect the left lower body. The right hand assumes the leading role in this posture to release *jin* force against the opponent's body. This point requires further explanation beyond the scope of this section.

The division between this posture and the following one is determined by the final stance. The feet move nimbly to draw closer to the opponent during the counterattack, which may be targeted at any part of the opponent's body, depending on your level of *gong-fu*. The variations for attack are too numerous to discuss here and depend wholly on the individual's skill levels.

The inscriptions to Fig 1.5.2 must be carefully studied and contemplated to consciously understand all the details[40].

The imagery of White Goose[41] Reveals its Wings is further highlighted by the synchronized movements of the leading right hand and the left. The right hand first moves down until it stops 7-8 *cun*[42] in front of the left ribs, palm facing inward in a hold-ball gesture, while the left hand rests above, palm facing obliquely downward. The right hand continues moving in a

[40] Specifically, the practioner should understand that the arm positions in Fig. 1.5.2 need to harmonize with positions of all four limbs in Fig. 1.5.1.
[41] *Translator's notes regarding the symbology of 'geese'*: Geese are a traditional symbol of stability for numerous reasons: their seasonal migrations follow seasonal rhythms unerringly; their flight formations are always orderly; they are monogamous and mate with only one partner in their entire life – if the partner dies, it is not replaced by another. Wild geese also symbolize gentle winds blowing over mountains – like waterfowl, they gather on riverbanks to fly over plains to the highlands.
[42] about 20 cm.

wide upward semi-circle until it stops at the right side of the head, while the left hand descends until it brushes above the left knee.

This posture imitates the gesture of a white goose stopping as though not stopping. Step your right foot a half-step[43] to the right, right toes pointing north, and draw your left foot a little closer to the inside of the right foot with an empty step to the right. Hence the right foot becomes empty while left foot solid, and the torso faces northwest. Look straight ahead. The *jin* force in the chest creates Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*, moving anti-clockwise from the lower right to upper left positions, hence drawing a full circle from left to right.

At the same time, the upper and lower limbs move synchronously until the right hand stops slightly on the right above head level. Look at the index and middle fingers of right hand; keep your neck upright, hance your elbow loosely, drop and relax your shoulders, contain the chest, bend the knees, round-in and open the crotch. The left leg is empty, supporting the right leg with the balls of the left foot on the ground. The right leg also has its foot flat on the ground, toes pointing northwest. Though the posture is titled under a different name, this is in fact the passive half used to lure the opponent into emptiness. Since the function of the entire posture is to fully open and release the body for counterattack, this half-posture, whose purpose is to close or accumulate, should be closely linked to the following posture to complete its ultimate function of opening.

5. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The posture lies under the auspices of hexagram Bi (8), symbol of inferior assistance and close relations. Hence, the left hand follows the leading right hand; the chest position is determined by right hand's semi-circular movement. Hexagram Bi (8) implies internal softness, which is realized by yielding the central area to coordinate the movements of the upper and lower body. The left foot re-adjusts its position by following

[43] about 40 cm.

the right foot, leaving the Guan (20) position to display the good fortune of Bi (8). According to the Bi (8) figure, the left side follows the leading right side of the upper and lower body, working mostly to attract but not counterattack so as to be associated with the lower *Kun* (earth) trigram (symbol of docility and softness) and the upper *Kan* (water) trigram (symbol of inner solidity within external softness). Therefore the upper and lower body follow each other, alternating in solid and soft motions. Like the ruler who lures her people out of darkness to a magnificent feast, this movement is one of passive attracting, not active attacking.

6. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture

Verse 1

Being idle and careless, look at the white goose:
Right wing spread like a wave.
Both arms form a huge hold-ball gesture to prop up the peak;
How come the world is overflowing with autumn waters?

Verse 2

How to realize the Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*?
Take a half turn rightward while both hands
Play spiral-like as a snail in late autumn.
Take a right step north
To launch the mechanism of the spirit starting from the right foot.
To 'spread wings' is derived from the image of the wild goose,
Which conserves true Energy and Spirit
Hovering slowly in the sky.

The purpose of the second verse is not to sing praises of the posture but to bring it to life. Here, the bent elbows and contained chest is likened to a drawn bow. So cultivate the spirit ceaselessly by proper closing and accumulation of energy!

Posture 6

BRUSH KNEE AND TWIST STEP

Lou-xi Ao-bu

1. *Diagram of the posture*

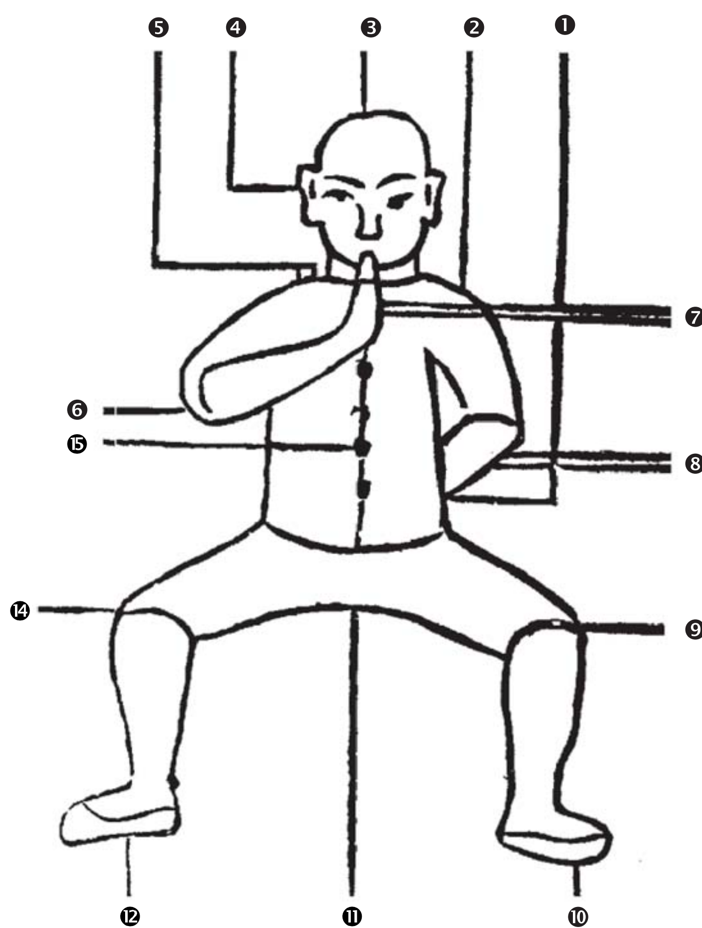


Fig. 1.6.1 Brush Knee and Twist Step (Lou-xi Ao-bu)

Inscriptions:

❶ this posture faces directly west to establish Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*; the image of *qi* represented here corresponds to the sequence of Fu Xi (*Qian*, *Kun*, *Kan* and *Li* correlating with the four cardinal directions); the left arm is slightly bent at the elbow and placed behind the back in a hook hand gesture, fingertips pointing upward; using *jin* force generated through the silk-reeling method, lower the back of the left wrist to the middle of the small of the back;

❷ sink the left shoulder to avoid the 'hunched shoulder' effect;

❸ reaching the top of the head, the intrinsic force of *Zhong-qi* leads the energy of the whole body;

❹ look at the middle finger of the right hand;

❺ sink the right shoulder to avoid the 'hunched shoulder' effect;

❻ the right elbow points obliquely to the side, right hand sitting in front of the upper chest, palm facing left, fingertips at nose level pointing up; the intrinsic force flows in the silk-reeling manner from the right shoulder to the hand, with the force of *Zhong-qi* concentrated in the right middle finger; the right hand stops 1 *chi* and 4-5 *cun*[44] away from the upper chest; relax the right hand to let *jin* force flow smoothly and to avoid sluggish *qi*;

❼ the chest is slightly concave like a drawn bow, bounded on both sides by the shoulders;

❽ the waist's *jin* force is activated; the coccyx is slightly upturned; the lower abdomen contains the intrinsic force naturally;

❾ the left knee points to the side and *jin* force reels along in a spiral, starting from inside the left foot and coiling outward around the ankle, then inward to rise up to the crotch;

❿ the left foot lies flat on the ground;

[44] about 45 cm.

⓫ the coccyx is rounded and tucked in; the bent knees point sideways to also round-in the crotch;

⓬ the right foot lies flat on the ground;

⓭ the right knee points sideways , and like the left knee above, *jin* force reels along the spiral-like trace, starting from inside the right foot to coil outwards around the ankle, then inward again rising up to the crotch;

⓮ the lower chest and abdomen are completely relaxed and concave, allowing *Zhong-qi* to flow freely up and down the upper and lower body; the spirit clears the face and fills the back with *qi* — this turns into *gong-fu* after long practice; once this is achieved, the *Taiji* practitioner becomes naturally aware of the limits of his spiritual progress and the development of his senses. This understanding can only be grasped through practice and cannot be explained with words.

2. The path of both hands in Lou-xi Ao-bu

The left hand coils so rapidly with astounding speed that it is difficult to follow its path. To represent the paths of both hands, Fig. 1.6.2 depicts the left hand at the small of the back and the right hand in front of the chest.

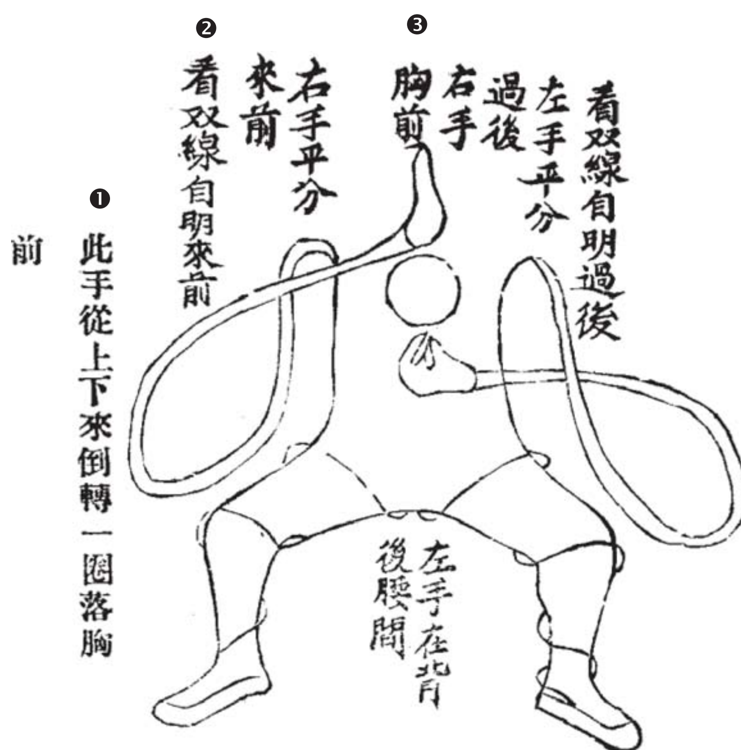


Fig. 1.6.2 The path of both hands in Lou-xi Ao-bu

Inscriptions:

❶ the paths of both hands are divided equally: the left hand is at the back, while the right hand is in front of chest;

❷ the right hand moves down in a circle until it stops in front of the chest;

❸ the left hand is placed at the small of the back, at the mid-point of the waist.

The Book of Defensive Energy Motion and Agile Pivot states:

> *"Defensive energy (Wei-qi) moves day and night, cycling fifty times through the body. In the day, it completes twenty-five cycles, the nature of which is yang; at night it completes twenty-five yin cycles.*
>
> *At dawn the power of yin qi comes to an end while the power of yang qi emerges from the eyes. Once the eyes open, qi rises to the top of the head, then down along the leg tai-yang channel of the bladder, the hand tai-yang channel of the small intestine, the leg shao-yang channel of the gall-bladder, the hand shao-yang channel of the triple warmer, the leg yang-ming channel of the stomach and the hand yang-ming channel of the large intestine. All these yang channels run in the day all around the external areas of the body.*
>
> *At night, the yin nature of Wei-qi runs in a similar manner. Starting along the leg shao-yin channel of the kidneys, yin qi flows to the hand shao-yin channel of the heart, the hand tai-yin channel of the lungs, the leg jue-yin channel of the liver and the leg tai-yin channel of the spleen.*
>
> *After completing twenty-five cycles, Wei-qi returns to the eyes to repeat the cycle from the beginning. At dawn, the newly-created qi of humans rises to the top of the head to return to the eyes over and over again."*

In *Taijiquan*, each posture makes *yang qi* cycle through the body until it attains *yin* motionless. Once stillness completes a cycle in the body, the mind/heart creates the thought to re-launch *yang qi* motion. Therefore one complete cycle through the body is equal to one thought of *yin qi* motionlessness.

Thus, the *qi* cycles complete their flow uninterrupted, dividing the whole body into two parts: the back for external *yang* and the chest for internal *yin*. The external sides of the forearms and the back of the hands are allocated to *yang*, while the internal sides correspond to *yin*. The face cor-

relates with *yang*, while the back of the head with *yin*. The upper body corresponds to *yang* while the lower to *yin*. Knees are *yang* but the crotch is *yin*. The left hand and foot are allocated to *yang* while the right hand and foot are *yin*. The in-step belongs to *yang* while the sole pertains to *yin*. *Qi* is allocated to *yang* while blood to *yin*. The six Fu organs correlate with *yang* while the five Zang organs to *yin*. Hence this is how sensitive organs and bodily structures are distinguished by their *yin* and *yang* characteristics.

When referring to the *Zhong-qi* movement from within, we mean that *jin* force attraction is a *yin* quality that emerges out toward *yang*. The action of bending correlates with *yin*, while stretching is *yang*. Taking an opening step outwards is considered a *yang* movement, while drawing a foot to the side of the other weight-bearing foot in a closing stance has an accumulating *yin* quality. The front part of the feet, that is, the toes, is allocated to *yin*, within which contains *yang*; conversely, setting the feet flat on the ground corresponds to *yang*, within which is contained *yin*.

In the externally-facing *yang* area of the forearm, the intrinsic force called *Lan Zhan Yi* flows from the right fingertips to the shoulder to form *yang* substance, while the reverse flow is allocated to *yin*. The root of arm, that is, the armpit, belongs to *yin*, and its *jin* force begins flowing from the bosom of the heart toward the fingertips in *yin* style; conversely, the reverse flow has *yang* qualities. Note that any *yin* movement contains within it elements of *yang* and vice versa. As the saying goes, "Two is One, but One is Two."

Movement of the arm to attract the opponent's *jin* force is allocated to *yin*, while its yielding correlates with *jin* force with *yang* qualities. This is called, '*yang* roots in *yin*' and manifests through the sudden contact of *jin* force flowing out from the armpit toward the hand.

The saying, '*yin* roots in *yang*' means *yang* contains *yin*. The reverse also applies. This mutuality originates from the beginnings of Nature and possesses a semi-retreating and semi-advancing characteristic, that is: within retreat is advancement, within advancement is retreat. In other words, retreat is advance and advance is retreat. Hence *yin* and *yang* make Oneness,

otherwise known as *Dao* or the Way. *Dao* can only be attained through humble submission to the path, not through opposing it. Without attaining the unified virtue of *yin-yang*, a hand's motion cannot be launched merely by thought. Conversely, once the virtue of *yin-yang* is obtained, your movement will always be properly timed, no matter how fast or slow.

Zhong-qi, when about to return to the Dan-tian, must possess a soft quality for *qi* to descend below the navel to the lower abdomen. To accomplish this, we must first understand what the Dan-tian truly is. If the Dan-tian is not the source of *qi*, why should *qi* return to it? This question, though simple, is very important. If we look for the source of *qi*, we will discover that *Yuan-qi* or primordial *qi* of the whole body originates from the kidneys, which correlate with water. When there is a sufficient 'water' quality, *qi* is strong and abundant and may be provided to the stomach as nutrients. Once the stomach accepts this, the *qi* (*yang qi*) will be stored in the liver.

Liver *qi* tends to flow in the reverse direction, and may overflow if *qi* is increased due to anger. This leads to an imbalance of bodily fluids in the heart. However, if the heart is not over-burdened with improper thoughts, it will remain at rest and tranquil.

Qi occupies the lungs to make it emit sound on behalf of a healthy heart. Whatever is said with the mouth first goes through the mind/heart. A strong gall-bladder does not restrain *qi* but instead follows it through the spleen channel. An abundance of *qi* running together with a shortage of blood results in sound accompanying the movements, which means that the routine is running in correct sequence. If there is movement in the spleen, there is corresponding movement in the heart. This relationship helps the large intestine obtain plenty of *qi* and reduces blood passing through the governing organ. It also helps the small intestine refine muddy *qi* in the anterior navel area and in the posterior spinal area, allowing polluted *qi* to be released and receiving clear *qi* in its stead.

Knowledge of the above-mentioned system of channels and collaterals is very useful in boxing practice. Specifically, the role of kidneys is of prime

importance, as strong kidneys significantly enhance boxing skills and technique. This occurs because *qi* is in abundance and accumulation of blood in the kidney channel is greatly reduced, all of which help to stimulate *jing* essence as a component of the triad: Volition, Essence and Spirit, the three treasures of life that is rooted in the kidneys. Each kidney makes a system connecting with the heart, through which they connect with the brains. It is *qi* from the brain that makes the kidneys truly effective. Starting from the brain, kidney *qi* returns to its dwelling place at the mid-point between the two kidneys called the Ming-men. The Ming-men is the principle gateway for *qi* entering and leaving. Hence in boxing, the term Ming-men is synonymous with kidneys as the source of energy coming in and going out, hence these terms will be used interchangeably hereafter.

The previous *Bai E Liang Chi* posture has the two arms lifted and containing *jin* force, which rises to both hands and fills them in equal proportion. This *jin* force subsequently flows down to the right foot, whose toes point west. Now, take a wide step about 70 cm left with the left foot, making sure that the toes of both feet are parallel with each other. Shift your weight onto both legs, distributing it equally between the feet. Lower the body slightly and brush the right hand lightly across the right knee to the right and upward, turning the right hand in a big circle to the left until it stops in front of the chest, palm facing left, fingers pointing upward at nose level. The left hand makes a similar brushing movement above the left knee, moving left and upward, then turning in a large circle down and backward until it stops in the mid-point of the small of the back. Both hands move and come to rest synchronously.

The right hand in front of the chest and the left hand at the back work together to 'clasp' the torso, tying the front with the back like a 'lofty mountain', in one single motion of concentrated spirit. The edge of the right palm faces west correlating with water, hence signifying that blood and *qi* can flow like a stream of water if the whole posture is performed properly. Flowing water leaves no empty spaces but covers everything in its path. Likewise, the right hand is used to control the situation in front of the

body, including the upper and lower parts, protecting it from any attacks. At the same time, the left hand faces east to control the situation from behind to prevent unexpected attacks from the 'back door'.

It is useful to mention here that the east correlates with *Li* (fire). The *Li* trigram is empty in the center but solid on each side, above and below. In boxing this means that the left hand positioned at the back must be empty and extremely agile to react appropriately and adequately to any kind of attack from behind. Both hands must guard the whole body from all sides. On the other hand, the agility of the left hand depends on all parts of the body moving in full coordination. The hook gesture of left hand, with fingers pointing up, is used to scare aggressors coming from behind, keeping them at bay. While the left hook hand guards the back, the left elbow points south and correlates with *Qian*, symbol of health and might. As long as *Qian* is stern and awe-inspiring, nobody dares to attack from that direction. The back of the right hand faces north and corresponds to *Kun*, symbol of yielding and docility in the management and adaptation to things and situations of all kinds. As the Book of Changes states: "Beauty dwells inside but flourishes outside to be manifested through the four limbs as an individual's achievement. This is what true beauty is." The right elbow sinks down to reflect this idea. Though there may be a powerful opponent in the north, who cares! As long as your ears can hear the opponent's approach and your eyes can see the colour of his closing in, you will be in full control of the situation, since both your hands can move in any direction in protection.

The *Qian* figure denotes the head and the round form, that is, a circle. As for the legs, if either the left or right one is lifted, they must be lowered. Kicking with the toes is used to defend the front, while kicking with the heels protects the back. The legs are allocated to *Zhen* (thunder), the symbol of motion. Lifting the legs as fast as thunder in a surprise attack to the upper body is not as effective and quick as an attack to the lower body. The effectiveness of the legs in conquering the lower body is indisputable, as an

old saying affirms, "Six seals are closed and protected from all four sides."[45] 'Six seals' refer to the four cardinal points, including the up and down directions. These seals have no gates through which on can enter, while the closing 'from all four sides' denotes that the robust defense of all sides cannot be penetrated by anyone.

The preceding *Bai E Liang Chi* posture is a perfect example of intrinsic force closing, while the current *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture is a perfect example of intrinsic force opening. In fact, *Bai E Liang Chi* represents the closing first half of the posture, whilst *Lou-xi Ao-bu* forms the second half, thereby completing the whole posture.

Bai E Liang Chi embodies motion, while its resting place embodies motionlessness according to the doctrine of 'motionlessness within motion'. The subsequent *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture also embodies motion, and its final position also denotes motionlessness. Thus, motion and motionlessness make the complete form. The final state of motionlessness from the preceding *Bai E Liang Chi* half-posture is allocated to the role of Guest, while the final motionless stance of the subsequent *Lou-xi Ao-bu* half-posture corresponds to the Host. Both half-postures come together in sequence to complete the full posture and provide a perfect example of pure opening.

Therefore you can say that the second half-posture plays the role of Guest, then becomes the Host and vice versa. The left and right sides of the body are drawn into a circle to close both half-postures into one breath, just as inhalation and exhalation together make a complete breath. This allows spirit and *qi* to continue flowing uninterrupted. There is a movement within opening, which for a little while operates as Guest: *qi* passes through the four limbs to flow in the subsequent *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture, after which it gathers itself to return to the Dan-tian. This is called, 'motion procreates *yang* while stillness procreates *yin*'. Hence motion and motionlessness are borne from the same root.

[45] The Chinese saying is 'si feng si bi'.

2. The four figures Qian, Kun, Kan and Li applied in the current posture

In the preceding pages, we discussed the directions of the postures which correlate with *Qian* and *Kun* of *Yuan-qi*. Due to its flow throughout the body, *qi* becomes soft externally and solid internally. In fact, *Qian*, symbol of health and strength, and *Kun*, symbol of yielding and docility, correlate with the heart, which corresponds to *Li*. The kidneys correspond to *Kan*. The clear and bright emptiness of the heart is associated with empty or divided line in the middle of trigram *Li*. Empty *qi* fills up and overflows like the solid undivided line in the middle of *Kan*.

Zhong-qi of trigrams *Qian* and *Kun*, intersects itself in the moving central lines to form trigrams *Kan* and *Li*. Here, water emerges from *Kun* while fire emerges from *Qian*. *Kan* and *Li* correlate with the kidneys and heart respectively, and their associated *qi* do not harm but support one another.

Once the moving central lines of *Qian* and *Kun* revert to their opposite forms, the original images of these two trigrams immediately re-establish themselves. Hence heaven, symbolized by the odd number one, gives birth to water. Earth, symbolized by the even number two, creates fire. This means that water is allocated to pre-birth while fire to post-birth essence.

Volition is stored in the kidneys but emerges from the heart. The mechanism of thinking (through the mind/heart) works by first developing the consciousness (*yi*), then issuing volition to command the Ming-men acupoint (kidneys) which stores the true embodiment of *yang* substance. On the other hand, Yin is issued as volition, the commander-in-chief of heart *qi*. Thus, *yang qi* is used to bring into play the motion of the heart, while consciousness emits volition, thus commanding the *yang* substance of the Ming-men. From the kidneys, *yang* or solid *qi* reaches Qi-hai, then passes through the heart to fill all four limbs. When this motion culminates, it gives birth to stillness. When the mind/heart is at rest, volition gives orders to the *yin* substance of Ming-men, which returns from the kidneys to Qi-hai.

Therefore *Li* is allocated to pre-birth essense but *Kan* to post-birth essence. *Li* is Host, but *Kan* exerts its power. While *Qian* and *Kun* remain unseparated, *yin* and *yang* exist in chaos and can be employed as a combined whole. This means that if you need to move, just move; if you need to be still, just be still. Do not waver.

In other words, the aforementioned can theoretically be called 'closing.' Closing implies concentration of *shen* in all four limbs, but not for the sake of the form. To form the posture you need to bring the right hand forward in front of the chest and place the left hand at the back, in the order mentioned previously. Place the feet 2 to 3 *chi*[46] apart to gather the energy of the body and maintain proper balance.

When the form does not concord with the contents (the spirit), the positions of the four extremities will not be as good as earlier described. The lower part of the posture will not resemble the stance of a dragon, meaning it is not sufficiently relaxed to achieve the state of 'opening within closing' and vice versa. The preceding posture must be correctly formed as it impacts the posture which follows. In fact, it should be properly prepared in advance and formed for its own sake.

Thus, starting from *Bai E Liang Chi*, keep the intrinsic force of both arms equally divided and move them forward or backward as needed. Open the legs when necessary and modify the distance between the feet as the form changes. The position of the hands and feet must be natural and suitable for unforced application, that is, without involving strength. As with the other postures, apply the natural mechanism of sufficient reaction. This means that once the motion is in the closing phase, *qi* must be returned to the Dan-tian, so that movement can culminate in stillness.

The *Taiji* motif should not be controlled by force to obtain more changes. Once energy is exhausted, you should rest in a natural posture to restore potential[47] energy, otherwise any subsequent postures will be out of synch with the natural alternations of opening and closing. You should yield to

[46] 60-90 cm.
[47] This refers to energy which flows or pumps along.

the natural mechanisms of opening and closing, remembering that the extent of opening and closing is different for each posture. Though there may be insufficient time to check your posture while sparring or in combat, the knowledge of principles, including the directions upon which each posture is built, will stand you in good stead and lead you to victory. If you may fight without this knowledge, your chances of victory are considerably less than mine, as one who is in full possession of this knowledge. This is what is called, 'the balance of force in boxing'.

Indeed, knowing how to keep things in balance by understanding and applying the principle of 'light and heavy' means establishing a unified connection with your opponent. The 'light and heavy' principle implies that the type or size of force applied against you, though of some significance, is not of primary importance. Ultimately, the reason why one practitioner may possess *gong-fu* and not another is actually due to the extent of her preparedness.

The key to boxing lies in grasping the method of body training. This includes training the body in the upright and oblique positions, stretching and bending, rotations in all directions, slanting movements forward, backward, left and right, and oblique movements up and down. Some postures require a steady sitting stance to defend the lower body, while others demand soaring above the head. Some are used in closing, others in opening. The variety of body techniques can be counted on both hands, but the most important point is to let *Zhong-qi* flow freely throughout the body. It does not matter what sort of technique you use in closing or opening to control the body's movement, the whole point is to make *Zhong-qi* flow throughout the body in all circumstances. At the conclusive movement, use the *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture as the upright technique. The preceding *Bai E Liang Chi* posture implies slanting the body rightward, while the current *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture implies the technique of re-adjusting the position back upright. The motion of the arms and legs remain circular, which means that there are no straight movements when drawing a circle. Nevertheless, straight and oblique movements, direct and reverse rotations, all these are still employed.

Being able to do a variety of turning techniques requires a high level of competence. Taking the preceding *Bai E Liang Chi* posture as an example, we see that it acts as a guiding beacon to *Lou-xi Ao-bu* which follows behind it.

3. *Free Verses*

Verse 1

This *Taiji* posture actually has no fixed orientation;
There is no need to make it too opened
Or too closed to cohere with the ensuing form.
In the *Xie-xing Ao-bu*[48] posture
The technique is like stamping a stake in the ground:
The right hand points northwest, the left hand southeast;
The left foot points southwest, the right foot northeast.
Take a wide stance —
open the crotch and stretch the arms to make a twist step
Until you stop in the direction of the aggressor;
Move your energy delicately and minimize your stance.
The intrinsic force of both hands is equally divided
and moves synchronously;
Brush your knee with the right hand and move it sideways in a loop
Until it stops in front of the chest,
while the left hand hides at the back.
Both feet stand parallel, toes pointing west.
A myriad banners fly in the air, their array strong and well disciplined
This is the pattern of the present form.
If you look at it from the outside,
You can see the shine of its stance and an auspicious aura all around.
There is no need to debase the ancient style to exalt the modern one.
Only thus can you discern which is strongest.

[48] Walking Obliquely and Twist Step.

I have heard about the marvelous sword dance and wonderful skills
Belonging to Master Sun's grandmother, called the *Xuan miao* or
Mysterious Style.
So why is there always a search for Goodness?
This is because in following obediently you come to no harm.
O the changes! As long as no one knows how they are done,
The only thing you should know is how to flow
with the stream as your guiding light.

Verse 2

It comes out from the kidneys and enters the kidneys
To use the silk-reeling method of restoring *jin* force.
You need to sink the body into the ground like a stake:
Stand relaxed and upright, don't sway or squirm.
Sink the soles and round-in the crotch, letting solid *qi* soften.
Again, abundant Yuan-qi induces an inexhaustible state,
As if all elements combine to work as a whole.

4. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture

Verse 1

Hold both arms equidistant[49], legs open in a stable position;
The right hand in front, the left hand behind —
keep the breadth of vision.
Between the arms keep the torso upright, adhering to standards;
Now, are you afraid of attacks from any side?

[49] Equidistance in the upper body means positioning the torso between the arms; in the lower body it means to spread the legs wide. To change the body's stance to the stake position, step the left foot across and twist the right heel. Control your stance — avoid bending sideways and maintain internal agility. This way no one will dare attack you. As the saying goes,"Preparedness ensures security."

VERSE 2

Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi* provides motion for the whole body;
Spread the legs and bend the knees to grasp the midpoint between the front and back.
Focus your attention on the middle fingertip of the right hand —
All around, near and far, who will dare to encroach your position?

VERSE 3

Starting from *Bai E Liang Chi*,
Opening and closing is realized by all the bodily structures.
There is only one true supplier of vitality[50]:
Whether to go out or come in, whose final decision is this?

VERSE 4

The rotation goes round endlessly;
The *Zheng-qi* of *Qian* and *Kun*
Flows boundlessly.
To learn the form in order to return to formlessness —
This is the way to realize the mystery of the universe,
The job of the Creator.

[50] 'Supplier of vitality' refers to the kidneys, the source of *Zhong-qi*. To 'go out' means motion, while to 'come in' refers to motionlessness. For every fixed state there is the unfixed. Again, all exists in the constant process of change. Hence both *yin* and *yang* substances change and alternate effortlessly and spontaneously, without complication.

Posture 7

POSTURE OF PREVIOUS IMPLICATION

Chu Shou

1. Diagram of the posture

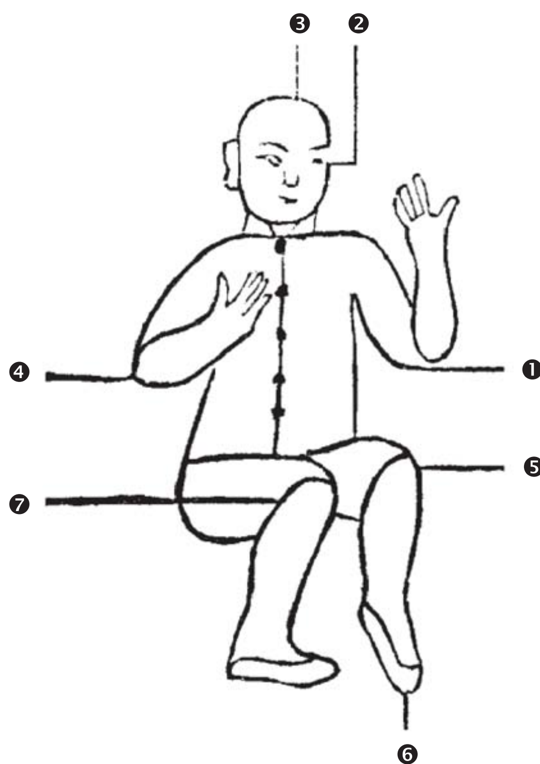


Fig. 1.7.1 Posture of Previous Implication (Chu Shou)

Inscriptions:

❶ drop the left elbow and lift the left hand to cheek level; empty the armpit; do not bring the left elbow close to the ribs so as to maintain equilibrium between the dropped elbow and the upper arm; the back of the left hand faces out while the palm faces in;

❷ look at the root of the fingers;

❸ focus on *jin* force at the top of the head to integrate it with the spiritual force of the body; keep *jin* force concentrated in one point at the top of the head to avoid scattering the energy, otherwise you will not be able to control your body's technique and react promptly to attacks from all sides;

❹ lower the right elbow until the right hand stops in front of the right nipple at a distance of 7-8 *cun*[51]; face the back of the hand outward and keep both hands about 35 cm apart;

❺ bend the left knee so that *jin* force runs through the inside leg; *qi* flow should be neither thick nor thin to avoid blockage;

❻ draw the left foot to the right foot, keeping them 4-5 *cun*[52] apart to form a left empty step; the right foot is firmly rooted to the ground;

❼ bend the right knee and point the toes west; round-in the crotch to increase *jin* force; sink the lower abdomen down and lean the chest slightly forward to connect it with the waist's *jin* force, which must be thick, not thin.

Placed the left hook hand at the back, unclenching its fingers while moving left and forward in a loop. Meanwhile, bend the left elbow and move the left hand in front of the chest from the left side, palm facing obliquely inward, until it stops at face level, slightly higher than the right hand, which stops in front of the right nipple.

[51] about 20 cm.
[52] about 12 cm.

2. *Positions of the hands*

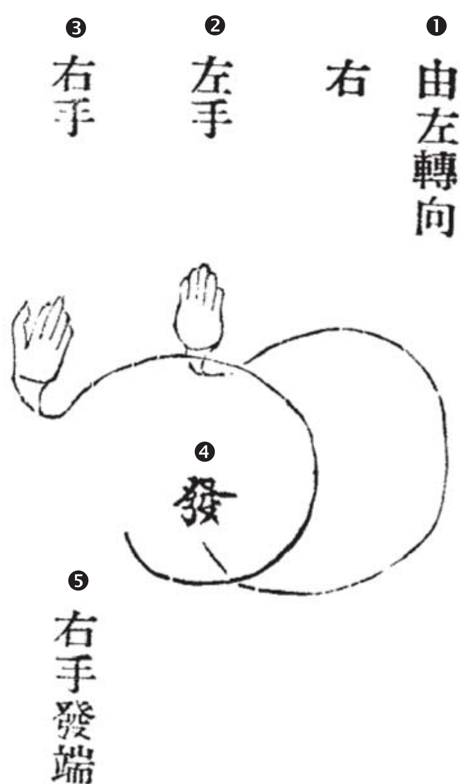


Fig. 1.7.2 Positions of the hands

Inscriptions:

- ❶ turn from left to right;
- ❷ left hand position;
- ❸ right hand position;
- ❹ make a start;
- ❺ right hand starts the motion.

The right hand moves slightly upward from the front of the chest, then backward until it stops in front of the right side of the torso, elbow tip pointing down, fingers pointing obliquely up. The fingers and cheeks are 35 cm apart.

3. Positions of the feet



Fig. 1.7.3 Positions of the feet

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left toes are gathered on the ground in an empty left step;
- ❷ the right foot of the supporting leg is flat on the ground.

In other words, the *Chu Shou* posture is used during the second round to express closing. The right hand is placed in front while the left rests slightly behind and below it. Both hands stay separate but are connected in a certain order to form the 'drawing in with both hands' gesture at the chest level. Concurrently, the whole body spirit is gathered in one place to maintain control over the entire posture.

Concentrating spirit and force and gathering scattered attention is referred to as 'drawing in', which is used to form a link between preceding and succeeding postures. First, the right hand moves slightly upward and left, then

back to the right and down in a semi-circle, until it stops in front of the right side of the torso, palm facing in and fingers pointing obliquely upward. This gesture is used to grasp and draw the opponent's forearm closer to your body in the same direction of his attack. For his part, the opponent should not continue his line of attack if he wants to avoid defeat.

Next, lift your right toes and turn the foot right in a small arc before resting it flat on the ground. When the right hand starts to move upward, move the left hand from behind to the left then forward in a circle, until it stops in front of the left side of the torso, about 7-8 *cun* from the left nipple. The left palm faces in and the outside of the left forearm presses down on the opponent's right forearm.

The distance between the left and right hands is about 35 cm. The left fingers point obliquely to the right toward the right shoulder, while the back of the left hand faces outward. Both hand move synchronously to grasp and draw the opponent's right forearm into a grip of emptiness. Performed correctly, this movement may indicate imminent victory.

Withdraw the left foot and gather it closer to the supporting right foot in a left empty step, in full readiness to kick the opponent's lower body with the toes, sole or heel. It is better to draw both hands in while executing a left kick. Though the movements of this posture may appear simple and of modest scale, they require a large amount of *qi* to be accumulated in the chest area, so that *jin* force can be pushed to the top of the head, in the same way as lungs filled with a large volume of air can exert upward pressure. The movements also stimulate muddy *qi* downward and enables pure *Zhong-qi* to be stored in the Dan-tian. In fact, it is the capacity of *qi* rather than scale of movement that is important: while executing a form, your *qi* capacity should be so big that your posture's capabilities cannot be determined. While it has been said that 'motionlessness is within motion', now we will have to say 'motion is inside motionlessness'. Indeed, this type of drawing in or pure closing resembles a hedgehog contracting into a ball and spreading out its countless spines.

2. *Four-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

The image of *Chu Shou*
Can be depicted as the grand wheel of *qi* circling,
Like a cat closely pursuing a mouse,
Reading to seize it in the final leap.
It is like a tiger before attacking a man,
First contracting all parts of its trunk.
It is like the king of beasts who always gathers together
His body, power and spirit.
Don't treat this form as a small one,
A hedgehog contracting into a small ball
But attacking like a macaque.
Concentrate your mind on agility
And look at the left palm.

If the need is to expand, just expand —
It is hard to withstand such incisiveness.
All along a foot-long worm
There is not an inch which doesn't stretch.
Despite my knowledge of this,
It is hard to comprehend its spirit.
If you deal with a highly skilled master
Who is able to find the straight in the curve,
His skills in movement is a dangerous thing
To disclose to others.

3. *Preliminary verse*

From head to tail a hedgehog contracts itself into a ball,
Like a drop of pure *yin*.
As long as *yang* is contained within *yin*,
Let the opponent approach!
Slowly lure him into a trap before he realizes,

Gradually trapping him by one single thought,
Emerging from the depths of consciousness.
The right hand is solid while the left is empty to thwart the attack;
Rise upward but strike downward to grip in a vertical vice.
If you can truly realize the principle underlying this technique,
You'll be a master of containment, never known till now!

5. *Five-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

An essay is valued for its contents,
So practicing boxing is the same:
If you want to be the one up and winning,
You must first suffer a great defeat.

6. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

If you wish to close after a previous opening,
Draw a small loop with both hands, rotating them outward.
Even if just closing, you'll see if spirit is accumulated;
One sudden rotation and the opponent will not know
How he got into all this. If you don't close,
There is no way to apply the skill of trapping him down.
Move gracefully to trap him through closing;
Men say that the posture is like a suspicious maiden,
But I think that holding one's step steadily
Is the way to cultivate the wisdom and experience of an old lady.
The right palm faces in, fingers pointing to the sky;
The left hand draws in closer to the left nipple to prevent an attack.
Like a fierce tiger descending a mountain, the belly is empty.
From outside it looks like a void, but it is filled with resourcefulness;
Now thin then thick — who can determine its capabilities?
You can try to pounce on a mouse, but first observe a nimble cat:
Before it pounces, it gathers all parts of its trunk.

Upon coalescing its trunk, it gathers its spiritual forces;
When energy is unified, the whole body becomes strengthened.
The circling of *Qian* and the rotating of *Kun* — both hands are within.
The state of prosperity and advantage — survey it soundly
And with great verve. He who looks cowardly and weak
Will hardly be able to find the proper way to attain it.

7. Symbolic meaning of the posture

Both hands are lifted upwards, resembling two upper *yang* (undivided) lines of the trigram *Xun*[53]. The abdomen is allocated to *Kun* (earth), represented by the three *yin* (divided) lines below. Thus, the posture is formed by the merging of the trigrams for earth and for wind moving above it, to form hexagram Guan (20), a symbol of trust and steady observation. *Zhong-qi* is clenched into a fist as 'the quintessence of trust'. The explanation for the entire figure (known as the Tuan) was composed by King Wen and goes like this:

> *"The superior man, great ruler of his own excellence, occupies the place of honor (the fifth line) in the figure, which consists of the trigrams whose attributes are docility (earth) and flexibility and service (wind). He is in the central position and in his correct place, thus exhibiting his lessons to all under heaven."*

With both hands, draw in and close the posture to fill it with *qi*. *Qi* should be generated and accumulated and the spirit raised. Watch out for the opponent, for she may attack from any direction. Observe carefully and be quiet in manifesting the lower half of the *Guan* figure, that is, trigram *Kun*, the symbol of docility and yielding. Yielding comes from the eyes, which is the attribute of *Xun*, especially the whites of the eyes or peripheral vision. *Xun* relies on *Zhen* (thunder), which corresponds to the eldest son, also referred to as the commander-in-chief. The commander-in-chief corresponds

[53] The Xun trigram is associated with wind and wood.

to the mind/heart, which is the stronghold of Nature or character (*xing*). Nature or character guides the motion of all four limbs: the lower limbs correspond to *Kun* and are able to follow the upper limbs when interacting with them. When all four limbs are jointly launched, *Kun* can produce the *Qian* form. Though it may appear weak from the outside, internally it is strong enough to perform the 'drawing in' according to the standard techniques of body movement. Consequently, the posture becomes filled with energy and brims over with *qi*, enabling the practitioner to accomplish constant changes in the most vivid, complete and confident way.

Thus *Taijiquan* is the equivalent of changes, or to put it another way, it is the way to deal with the Book of Changes[54]. This includes: all its symbols,the sixty-four hexagrams, the explanation of the Tuan by King Wen, the explanation of the separate lines[55] by the Duke of Chou called '*Da-xiang Chuan*',[56] and the explanation for each of the six lines of the hexagram[57] also attributed to the Duke of Chou, with commentary by Confucius' followers. These explanations are actually interpretations of the moving and separate lines, or to the entire figures. Interpretations can also be found in the 'Great Appendix'[58]; the 'Treatise of Remarks on the Trigrams'[59] and the 'Orderly Sequence of Hexagrams of the Book of Changes'[60] written by Confucius's followers. In addition, there are interpretations on the doctrines of hexagrams Bo (23), Fu (24), Pi (12), Tai (11); and also interpretation on fundamental concepts such as *yin* and *yang*, growth and decline and so forth.

We cannot enumerate the great variety of meanings for the myriad of images and symbols, through these may provide different kinds of energy in various proportions. All we can assume is that only *Taijiquan* corre-

[54] known as '*Zhou-yi*'.
[55] known as the '*Yao*'.
[56] Great Symbolism Commentary.
[57] also known as the 'Lesser Symbolism'.
[58] known as '*Xi-ci Chuan*'.
[59] known as '*Shuo-gua Chuan*'.
[60] known as '*Xu-gua Chuan*'.

sponds completely to the name and meaning of *yin* and *yang*, so tightly entwined it is with the Way inscribed in the Book of Changes.

Looking at the entire structure of the current posture, we notice again how sufficiently it provides for the opening and closing stances, the solidity of its *yin-yang* proportions, and the fine balance of its direct and reverse rotations. A truly powerful posture, it allows you to cultivate boxing as an art, so profound is its resourcefulness!

8. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture

Mastering the skill of hands, draw the *Taiji* motif day by day —
This method no person can fully appreciate.
The doctrines of *yin* and *yang*, growth and decline
Are quite sufficient in themselves.
Rely completely on your mind/heart,
Which is reflected in your hands technique.
All circles you draw are straight or oblique,
And each loop is nothing but the *Taiji* motif.
Moving obliquely or upright, separating or reuniting -
Everything bears the stamp of your temperament.
See, however, if you can be more sensitive;
The mechanism of agility granted by heaven —
Its wonders are fathomless!
The pivot of all your rotations and turns is the Mind;
If you can understand this,
You can surely comprehend the purpose of boxing
And all the thirty-six palaces of it
Will always be blossoming in spring for you!

Posture 8

Walking Obliquely and Twist Step

Xie-xing Ao-bu

Start this posture by facing north, in the way as the second *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture. Turn westward in a similar fashion as the *Chu Shou* posture, then finally face southwest for the *Xie-xing Ao-bu* posture. When the torso reaches this point, look at the right hand pointing northwest.

1. *Diagram of the posture*



Fig. 1.8.1 Walking Obliquely and Twist Step (Xie-xing Ao-bu)

Inscriptions:

❶ the right palm faces northwest; according to the sequence of Fu Xi, this is the position of trigram *Gen* (mountain); according to arrangement of King Wen, this is the position of trigram *Qian*;

❷ the left arm points southeast; according to the sequence of Fu Xi, this is the position of the trigram *Dui* (marsh); according to the arrangement of King Wen, this is the position of *Xun* (wind/wood). The current posture allows the four figures, *Gen, Dui, Zhen* and *Xun* to be located in the four corners according to the sequence of Fu Xi, so you need to make a big swing with the upper and lower body while taking twist step (*Ao-bu*), making sure the arms and legs do not adhere too strictly to the four cardinal directions. According to Fu Xi, the four corners of the Eight Trigrams represent the types of body movement linking all the stances in the *Taiji* routine. As a poet once said, "The wind has changed, blowing neither eastward nor westward";

❸ northwest;

❹ southeast;

❺ southwest;

❻ northeast;

❼ the left foot points southwest; *Xun* is positioned according to Fu Xi and *Kun* is placed according to King Wen's arrangement;

❽ rotate the upper body at the waist, keeping the lower body at rest; the waist is the boundary between the upper and lower body and also acts as a pivot around which the two halves rotate left and right;

❾ the right foot points northeast; *Zhen* is positioned according to Fu Xi, while *Gen* is placed according to King Wen.

While the upper and lower body may change directions, the bones, tendons and joints continue to work in concert with each other, maintaining harmony in the whole body through opening-closing movements, hence letting *Zhong-qi* flow freely throughout the body. In fact, it does not matter how many parts of the body change positions, as long as the principles of

body control are maintained. Hence the saying, 'Even though being different, it is still the same.'

The current *Xie-xing Ao-bu* posture is quite difficult to illustrate on paper as it is impossible to depict all the changes occurring in various parts of the body simultaneously. Besides, many of these changes do not remain static but evolve dynamically with the movements. For example, *jin* force coils along the left hand to flow up the left forearm, but once the left hand moves to the back, *jin* force flows back down the elbow toward the root of the fingers.

The right hand moves inward in a circular motion, which when completed, activates a coil of *jin* force which moves from inside out until it reaches the fingers of the right hand, which point up at chest level. Both hands move synchronously.

2. *Movements of the arms and legs*

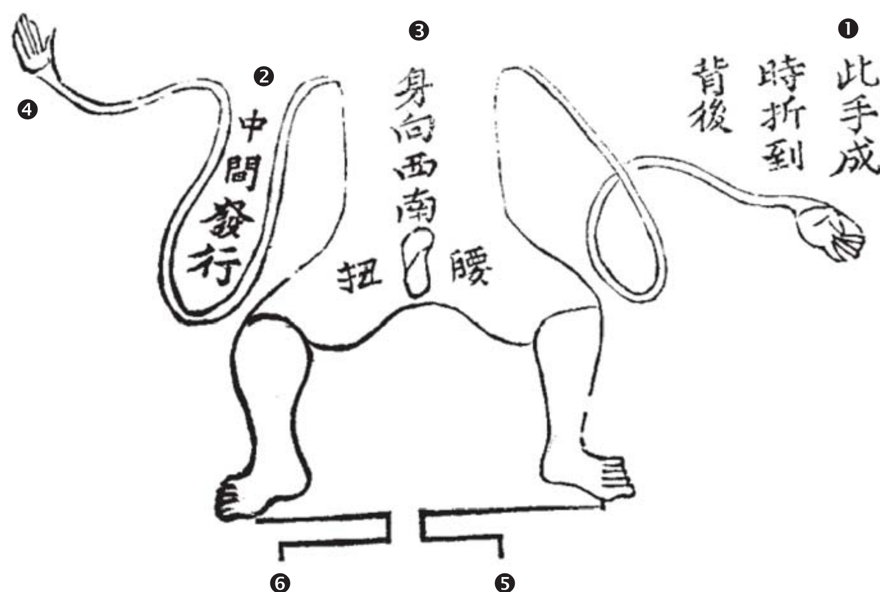


Fig. 1.8.2 Movements of the arms and legs

Inscriptions:

- ❶ when this hand is properly placed at the back in the final movement, the torso faces to southwest;
- ❷ turn at the waist, starting the turn in-between steps;
- ❸ move the left hand sideways to form a hook hand pointing southeast;
- ❹ stretch the right hand in front of the chest, fingers pointing northwest and stuck together;
- ❺ step the left foot southwest;
- ❻ place the back right foot flat on the ground, toes pointing northeast.

When the left hand brushes the left knee and moves sideways in a southeast arc, the back of the hand, like the torso, faces southwest, so the left hand is positioned on the left. The left hand hook is formed by gathering the five fingertips into a hook or beak shape pointed down. The back of the left hand, together with the wrist and forearm resemble the shape of a newborn moon.

Brush the knee with the right hand by drawing a circle above it then moving to the side. While drawing this circle inward and northwest, the intrinsic force also moves northwest while the torso and back of the right hand faces southwest. Focus your attention on the middle finger of the right hand. When left hand makes the brush-knee gesture, the right hand follows suit a few seconds later in the same direction, so that it becomes positioned ahead, while the left hand comes to a rest on the left side of the torso. Thus, when starting a movement with both hands in rotation, the left hand moves first, followed by the right hand. In the final stance, the right hand is located in front of the body while the left hand is positioned behind.

3. *Walking Obliquely and Twist Step (Xie-xing Ao-bu)*

Walking Obliquely and Twist Step is performed in an oblique direction from northeast to southwest.

First take a wide step with the left foot. Then place the right heel on the ground in front of the left toes on one side. The right heel is re-adjusted and flattened on the ground in the final position, after the left foot takes a second wide step about 2 *chi*[61] southwest.

Shift the body weight to the front leg after taking two wide steps to the left and one step with the right foot. All the three steps are taken obliquely using the 'twist step' technique. While taking a step left to the southwest, the right foot remains at the northeast, the right hand is at northwest while the left hand points southeast. Both hands and legs move simultaneously throughout the whole posture which consists of three steps taken sequentially.

Although all four limbs point at different corners, the right hand leads the left hand at the completion of the *Chu Shou* posture. The left hand and left foot are placed slightly behind, with the left foot then taking a wide oblique step[62] southwest while the left hand move sideways in a semi-circular brush-knee gesture. These movements resemble water flowing rapidly down the eaves of a roof. When this is done, the right hand also moves down in the brush-knee gesture, then turns upward and forward to complete the circle.

When the right hand arrives behind the torso from the right, the left hand takes its forward position. When the right hand rotates in a forward circle, *jin* force coils out along the out-stretched right forearm pointing northwest. The back of the right hand faces obliquely up and southwest synchronously with the left.

[61] about 60 cm.
[62] about 70 cm.

While turning full circle, the intrinsic force coils from the armpit along the forearm toward the hand. Meanwhile, the left forearm extends forward with a hook hand, fingertips pointing down. Focus your attention on the middle finger of the right hand. While the right hand is stretched out, gather the four fingers together and point them up. The round part of hand between the thumb and index finger is slightly closed to ensure good coordination of movements between the upper and lower body.

This is how both hands perform their functions. Before the left hand assumes its final position on the left side, the right hand starts to move in the opposite direction. When the left hand is behind, the right is in front. When the left hand starts to turn up and forward, the right begins turning down and back and vice versa. When the left arm extends out, the right hand draws a circle backward; when the right arm extends out, the left hand moves back in a slow semi-circle.

The following two diagrams illustrate the flow of *jin* force in the left and right hands, correlating with the top of the head, crotch and legs.

4. Flow of intrinsic force in the right and left hands

Both hands draw two circles. This movement is depicted here once again in the following diagram for greater clarity to supplement the previous diagram.

Jin force coils directly out and upward, then runs in and downward to form a full circle of the oblique silk-reeling method.

a) Diagram of the right hand's intrinsic force

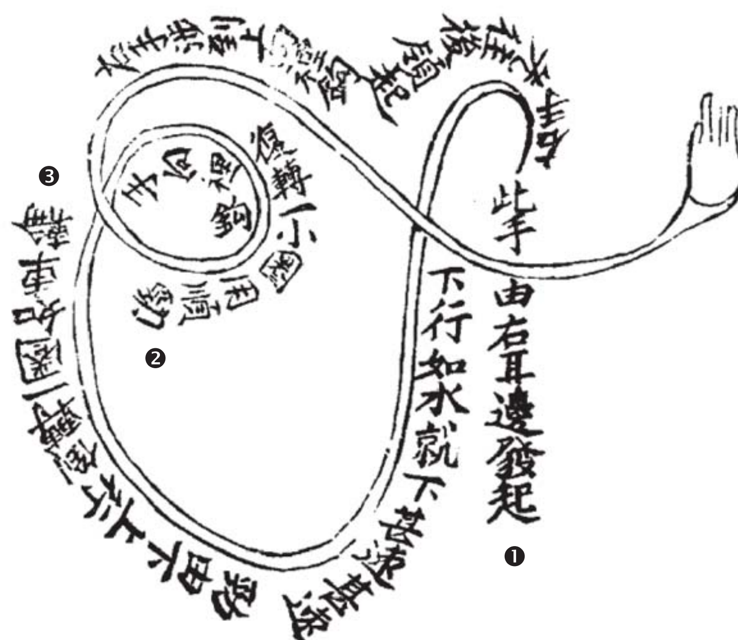


Fig. 1.8.3 Diagram of the right hand's intrinsic force

Inscriptions:

❶ the right hand's movement starts in front of the right ear, then moves forward and down in a circle like a rapid stream of water, to turn upward in a cartwheel motion;

❷ the right forearm rotates inward to let intrinsic force flow through and draw another small semi-circle;

❸ once the right hand reaches the upper position, its forearm rotates in again to repeat the circular brush-knee movement backward.

B) Diagram of the left hand's intrinsic force

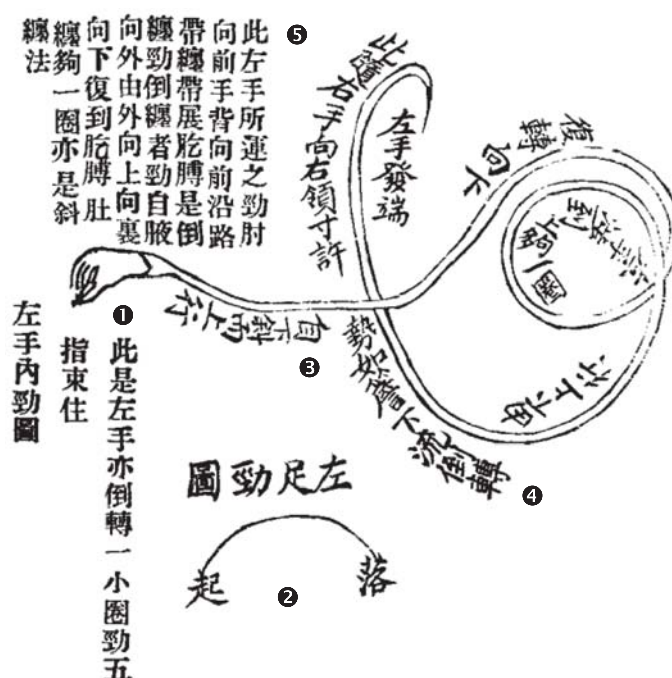


Fig. 1.8.4 Diagram of the left hand's intrinsic force

Inscriptions:

❶ the intrinsic force turns backward in a small circle; the five fingers form a beak pointing down;

❷ diagram of the left foot's intrinsic force;

❸ lift up; place the heel on the ground;

❹ the start of the left hand's movement; the left hand follows the right hand and moves forward slightly behind the right hand, resembling water running along the eaves, flowing through turn by turn; then it rises up to draw a full circle at a greater height, then running down again, finally rising up in the last oblique movement;

❺ the elbow's *jin* force is generated as a result of the left hand's coiling movement from the back of the hand along the outstretched forearm. Starting from the armpit, this *jin* force moves out and upward, then in and downward, repeatedly coiling along the forearm in the full circle of the oblique silk-reeling method.

5. Walking Obliquely technique applied to figures Gen, Dui, Zhen and Xun

Trigram Gen is associated with the arms. The right hand is placed northwest, the position of *Qian* and the symbol of health, according to arrangement of King Wen. *Gen* is the symbol of stopping, so both hands are used to stop the opponent's attack. Your solidity is provided through *qi* generated within a strong nature.

The left hand is placed southeast and correlates with trigram *Dui*, symbol of the youngest daughter and also of destruction, in so far as the stereotype of the 'youngest daughter' embodies impetuousness, restlessness and the tendency to inflict destruction all around. So, in fear of being harmed, the opponent dares not attack.

According to arrangement of King Wen, the southeast corner is associated with *Xun*. Hence the left hand moves like a gust of wind, fast and sweeping, to reveal skillful hand techniques. The whites of the eyeballs, inferring peripheral vision, are very useful here for detecting the opponent's maneuvers.

When the hand is behind, watch the opponent with your mind/heart. Move the hands sideways, as if they are also able to sense the opponent. To see with the heart is true seeing, so even if you do not use peripheral vision when there are multiple attackers from all sides, your body is still able to maintain the advantage by using the 'seeing' left hand to keep watch behind the body.

If the backward circular movement is not fast enough to react to the opponent's attack, you need to adjust the structure of the whole body's to respond to the situation. When the hand moves fast enough to react to the opponent's attack, the left heel steps forward toward the southwest (this corresponds to *Xun* according to the sequence of Fu Xi). The front left leg can then advance or retreat toward *Kun* (which corresponds to the southwest according to the sequence of King Wen).

By stepping with the left foot, you can multiply the strength of your lower body by raising the left leg synchronously with the upper limbs in counterattack or defense. Place the right foot northeast (according to Fu Xi), associating it with *Zhen*, the symbol of motion. The counterattack should be forceful and swift, like that of a dragon attacking its prey by surprise. The right leg is like the dragon, strong in its ability to change swiftly and constantly, supported by the stability of the legs. Hence it is said that to be able to move constantly and effectively, one needs strong and healthy legs. Strength of the right leg is especially effective, as long as it correlates with trigram *Gen* (mountain) and is placed at the northeast, according to the sequence of King Wen. The stability of *Gen* is transmitted to the arms, hands and fingers, all of which work together first to inhibit the opponent's force, then to counterattack with the mighty beak (hook hand). Simultaneously, kick like a bird attacking its prey.

The position of the hands and feet in *Xie-xing Ao-bu* is associated with the four corners controlled by the mind/heart through the flow of *Zhong-qi* along all limbs. Each limb plays a specific part and can be compared to troops under the command of a general who strategizes for three legions to attain total victory. *Xie-xing Ao-bu* is akin to a special unit in the army who plays an important role in securing victory.

5. Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture

Slanting wrist and a loose and relaxed ankle — a truly sorry sight!
Your foresight is useful in this indeed;
Skillful hands penetrating space — where do they come from?
In the *Taiji* motif the most treasured thing is constant change.
Constant change is part of the spiritual mechanism —
A resource never inert nor blocked.
Gong-fu returns to the source — repeated training;
Repeated training is true gold, the one that really glitters;
Truly glittering gold is like lightning stroke.
This is the highest level toward attaining gong-fu;
However, before you attain this you have to go through hardship.
Through suffering everyday hardships you will understand
The fact that hardships have no end. But once hardships end,
You will turn into a celestial being in no time.

Posture 9

SECOND POSTURE OF IMPLICATION

Zai Shou

1. *Diagram of the posture*

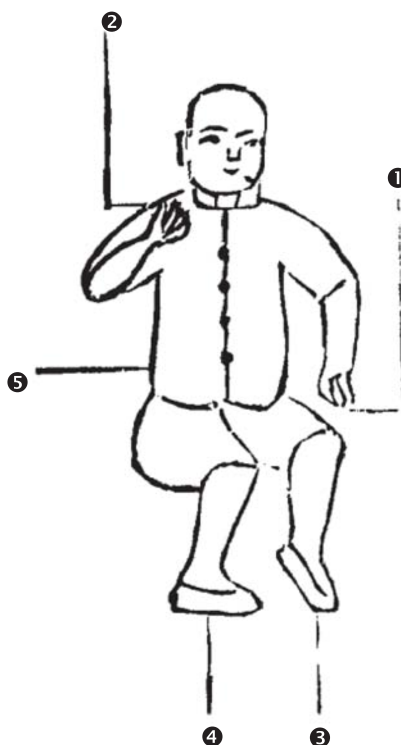


Fig. 1.9.1 Second Posture of Implication (Zai Shou)

Inscriptions:

❶ the back of the left fist faces up, knuckles down;

❷ the back of the right fist faces out, knuckles obliquely forward;

❸ take an empty step with left toes firmly on the ground;

❹ flatten the right foot of the supporting right leg on the ground;

❺ the *jin* force of the waist descends into the buttocks; turn the crotch slightly upward to hold the intrinsic force of the crotch naturally.

One must always strive to generate adequate flow of *jin* force. If insufficient, additional intrinsic force can be re-generated through the mechanism of the lower body. This means that extremely developed *yin* gives birth to *yang*, which manifests naturally in the *Zai Shou* posture. The natural principle of *Zai Shou*'s structure requires observation of the right hand. *Jin* force at the top of the head leads to *jin* force of the chest in closing. To this end, the *Taiji* practitioner should merge the upper and the lower body, internally stimulating both bones and tendons to produce a multiplied effect emerging from their interaction.

In the first *Chu Shou* posture, the torso and feet face southwest with the left foot in front of the right. Take three oblique steps, torso still facing southwest, to form the current *Zai Shou* posture in the same direction. Then turn the torso northwest to segue from *Xie-xing Ao-bu* to *Zai Shou*. Focus your attention mostly to the west.

When sparring, cast your thoughts ahead toward the oncoming *Qian-tang Ao-bu* posture to link it to *Lou-xi Ao-bu*, hence facilitating the seamless flow of three consecutive forms. The right hand follows the left and turns in a circle. At the same time, the right fist unfolds its fingers while moving past the front of the right ear, descending to 7-8 *cun*[63] in front of the torso. Clasp the left fingers together and lower them to 5-6 *cun*[64] above the left knee and 7-8 *cun* from the torso. Both hands move simultaneously until they 'stop while not stopping'.

[63] about 20 cm.
[64] about 15 cm.

2. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

The *Chu Shou* posture manifests a rotation produced in the natural way;
Nothing can be compared with this rotation, so skillful is its technique.
All former rotations are made in the expansive style,
While this rotation is borne from a delicate perception.
Once the technique from the small rotation
reaches the point of nothingness,
The whole idea of the square returning to the *Taiji* circle
Will truly produce divine wonders.
Some experts claim this art has no worth at all,
All the time refusing to reveal it to the people.
I would call this art a product of habit,
As long as it is practiced from early childhood to old age.
With practice until old age, realization will naturally come,
And sudden enlightenment will coalesce
The skillful techniques, the practice methods and everlasting spirit.
If you turn away from the path, just thinking of indolence,
This is far away from insight obtained through silence.
Once you open your mouth, you cannot enter my mind;
If my mind is full of deep antipathies — too many troubles.
Day to day speak, day after day forget; if you have the mind,
It doesn't matter whether you understand or not.
If you have ability, one day you will express your strength.
Yin and yang, growth and decline — time to come, time to go.
Each day I practice carefully the game called *Taijiquan*
To cultivate my nature through the doctrine of opening and closing.
By following the proper sequence and making steady progress,
You cultivate your gong-fu, which grows stronger.
With the passing of time you'll be able to detect the smell of Truth;
The only thing you need to do is to practice without long breaks.
Taiji is everywhere and seems to be formed as a shining sphere,
Which is the true formula of *Taijiquan*.
Try to attain calm and contemplate this with care.

3. *A song of praise dedicated to Zai Shou as the link between the preceding and following postures*

> Originally, the *Lou-xi* posture is followed by *Chu Shou*,
> While *Zai Shou* springs from the form of *Xie-xing*.
> The whole body looks forward next to *Qian Tang*
> To succeed in parrying and striking with the right hand.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The current posture focuses on bent points of the body. The right hand points upward and obliquely forward, the arm bent at the elbow. This is symbolized by a dominant *yin* seriously damaging *yang*, just as an oppressed populace overthrows a dictator. This critical condition correlates with hexagram Bo, symbol of destruction and the vanquished, as stated in the Book of Changes under the number 23. Based on a strong and dominating lower body (up to the lower abdomen), Bo's great attribute is in producing unlimited vitality.

Therefore all the conditions point to the Bo (23) hexagram. It comprises of the lower inner trigram *Kun*, whose second to fourth divided lines can be alternated with its opposite, *Qian*, and the upper inner trigram *Kun*, whose third to fifth divided lines can also be alternated with *Qian*. These symbols signify virtue contained within the solidity of the lower body, whose *jin* force suffers if found in grave conditions.

As the *Da-xiang Chuan*[65] states,

> *"Bo is formed by the trigrams representing earth below and mountain above, which is also based on earth. In accordance with this, people in high positions seek to strengthen those below to secure and stabilize their own position".*

[65] Great Symbolism Commentary.

Posture 10

LOWER STANCE IN FRONT OF CHAMBER AND TWIST STEP

Qian Tang Ao-bu

1. *First half of the posture*

The *Qian Tang* posture assumes that the starting position of the legs are in front of the Chamber (torso), facing the same direction as the oblique *Xie-xing* posture, that is, toward the corner. However, this is not the case, for in the *Qian Tang* posture, the corner orientation is changed to the cardinal direction.

2. *Diagram of the posture*

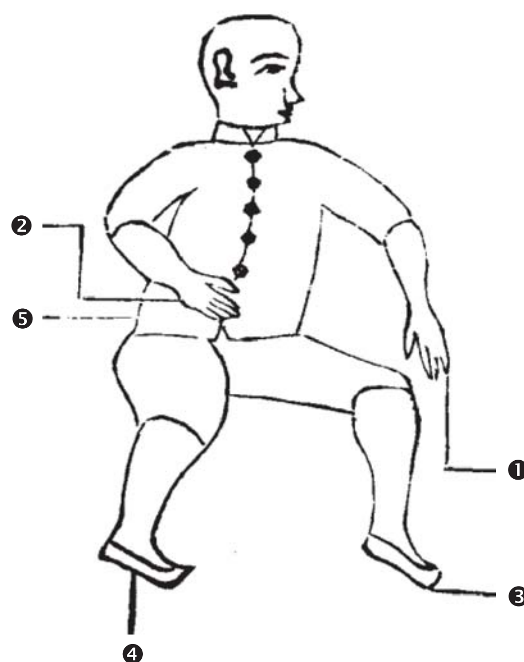


Fig. 1.10.1 First half of Qian Tang Ao-bu

Inscriptions:

❶ rotate the left hand outward and up, fingers pointing down in the likeness of water flowing downstream;

❷ the right hand moves downward and out, then upward and in again in an arc; drop the right hand down, like a torrent in a cascade rushing beyond restraint;

❸ raise the left foot and take half a step forward in an arc, lowering the ball of the foot toward the ground; at the same time, flatten the right foot behind on the ground, then slightly withdraw the front left toes to form a lower empty left step; do these movements as if dipping your left toes in deep water;

❹ then flatten the right foot on the ground until the front left foot touches the ground; next, draw the rear right foot half a step forward;

❺ take a half step forward with the left foot, twisting the waist simultaneously; at the same time, move the left hand sideways and relax the shoulders, hanging them abruptly like a waterfall dropping into a deep abyss or a fierce tiger descending swiftly from a mountain.

Following the moving right hand, the left foot sweeps inward and outward in an arc, toes coming to a rest at the northwest. Following the left hand, the right hand draws a circle and the ball of the left foot touches the ground lightly. Both hands move like a fierce tiger descending a mountain.

Whilst the preceding posture is matched with hexagram Bo (23), the *Qian Tang Ao-bu* posture is associated with hexagram Fu (24), symbol of return and reconstruction, and of extremely developed *yin* giving birth to *yang*. As *yang* is absent in Fu's upper trigram, great results cannot yet be achieved, and the only way for *yang* to be born is in the lower figure, in the bottom line of trigram *Zhen*.

The preceding Bo hexagram has for its central figure, *Kun*, which can be alternated with its opposite *Qian* as the pure embodiment of *yang*. Hence the posture for Bo has both hands raised in achievement, representing the

replacement of *yin* with *yang*. While both hands are upturned, *Zhong-qi* is placed in the middle area as a sign of yang's creation.

These preceding Bo postures indicates that within seven days, the current *Qian Tang Ao-bu* posture will experience a return of *yang*, which will repeat its proper course. This is signaled by the strong bottom line of hexagram Fu (24), which depicts the commencement of *yang* motion. Therefore the second light step with the right foot is taken without pause to reveal the symbol of Fu.

Step the left foot forward. The left side of the torso follows the left hand and makes a large turn resembling a cartwheel. After this, the right hand makes the same rotation.

3. *Diagram of jin force*



Fig. 1.10.2 Diagram of jin force

Move the left hand forward in a circle, like water plunging from a waterfall; at the same time, step your left foot forward.

The right hand moves in parallel to the left; at the same time, the upper and lower body twist synchronously and smoothly, without obstruction; as you step your left foot forward, your left hand brushes your knee in an arc; then the right foot stomps firmly on the ground, the right hand brushes the right knee in an arc.

4. *Second half of the posture*

The third step commences after right hand completes the brush-knee movement. When right hand reaches the lower position, extend the left hand forward. The *jin* force of the back flows backward in a small reverse circle.

Take a wide step forward with the left foot and flatten it westward on the ground in the same direction as the left hand, while the right hand clenches into a fist to strike from behind.

Fig. 1.10.3 depicts the position of the right hand at the back. Do not raise the body to reveal the boundaries within the *Qian Tang Ao-bu* posture. If you do so, you will immediately enter the subsequent posture and cause the *qi* of both postures to merge together. The *qi* of *Qian Tang Ao-bu* tends to flow upward, so try to keep it down until the end of the posture.

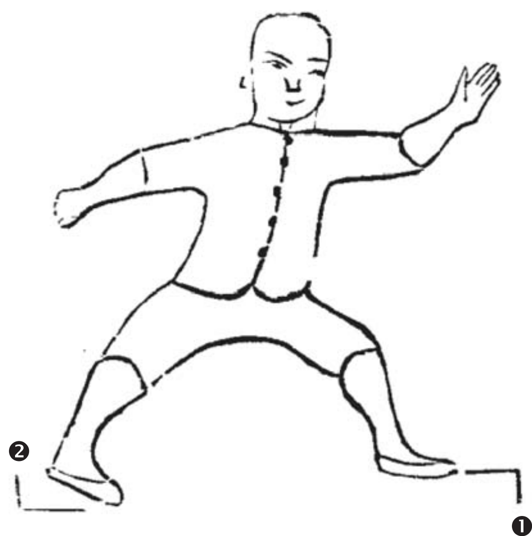


Fig. 1.10.3 Second half of Qian Tang Ao-bu

Inscriptions:

❶ flatten the left foot on the ground;

❷ the right foot stamps on the ground behind.

This is the second half of *Qian Tang Ao-bu* and it links up with the subsequent *Yan Shou Gong Chui* posture in one breath. Try to move without stopping, keeping the characteristics of hexagram Fu (24) in your heart. In boxing terms, this non-stop motion is called Hao-qi which circulates throughout the body and should not be stopped or interrupted. As the Great Symbolism Commentary states, "The Fu hexagram is formed by the earth trigram with the thunder trigram in the middle." Thus the left arm is extended forward and slightly upward, while the right hand is placed behind in an open strike, that is, without being screened by the other hand. However, the attack is so powerful (thunder-like) that it leaves no opportunity for the opponent's counterattack.

5. *Song dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

The *Qian Tang* posture has to reflect *Jin-gang*;
In boxing terms this is the most critical point.
The silk-reeling method works here as it has worked before;
Have a good look at the hexagram and you'll be able
To grasp its wonderful grace expressed in the natural way.

Verse 2

The Shou posture performed the second time
Should not be long or wide: rise in a short loop;
Both feet point in the same direction;
The upper body follows the lower body's move
In taking three steps, one by one.
The subsequent *Yan Shou* form springs from *Qian Tang*.
The *Qian Tang* posture is performed in the lower stance
Similar to the way Walking Obliquely is done,
Then turning northwest while standing in the center.
The right lower side merges with the upper part
To concentrate *jing* essence and *shen*.
The left foot stamps on the ground like a bronze screen.

6. Diagram of left and right brush-knee gestures at the second step

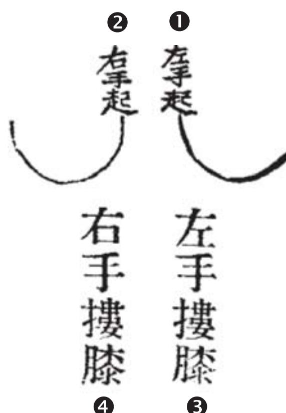


Fig. 1.10.4 Diagram of left and right brush-knee gestures at the second step

Inscriptions:

- ❶ lift the left hand;
- ❷ lift the right hand;
- ❸ make the brush-knee gesture with the left hand;
- ❹ make the brush-knee gesture with the right hand.

Rotate in a semi-circle once the left hand brushes above the left knee and moves backward. The right hand leads the right foot, which steps to the right, heel to the ground. The left hand moves forward, while the right hand brushes above the right knee in a reverse circle. This is the second step.

Posture 11

Screening Hand Strike with Hidden Forearm

Yan Shou Gong Chui

1. Diagram of the posture

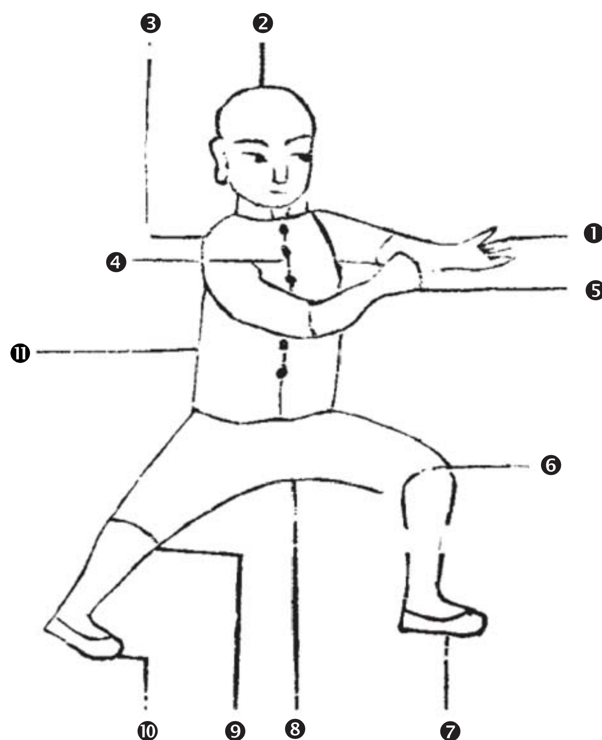


Fig. 1.11.1 Screening Hand Strike with Hidden Forearm (Yan Shou Gong Chui)

Inscriptions:

❶ the left arm stretches forward and may be raised as an option;

❷ *jin* force rises to the top of the head to keep the whole posture under control;

❸ *Zhong-qi* goes through the back; *jin* force coils slightly around the torso;

❹ hold down the upper chest;

❺ the right hand rests a little bit behind, facing down; hold the *jin* force in the style of the silk-reeling method;

❻ bend the left knee in a firm bow step forward;

❼ point the left toes northwest, heel pressed down on the ground;

❽ the crotch is rounded-in and empty to enable unobstructed circulation;

❾ bend the right knee slightly but firmly;

❿ dig the right toes into the ground, using strength and body weight;

⓫ sink the waist's intrinsic force: open both knees, round-in the crotch and empty the lower body naturally; the emptier the lower body, the more fluid the circulation, and the more stable and unobstructed the stance.

2. *Diagram of steps in Xie-xing Ao-bu and Qian Tang Ao-bu*

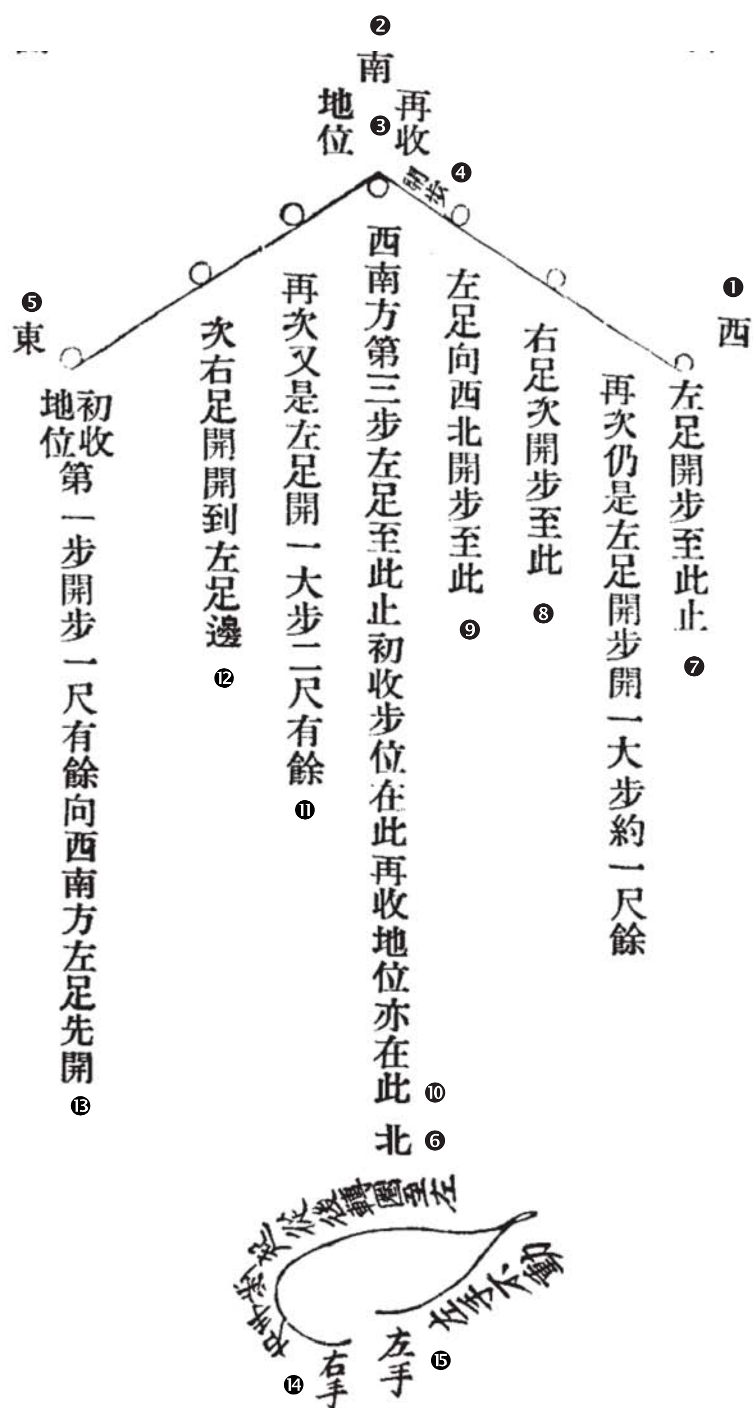


Fig. 1.11.2 Diagram of steps in Xie-xing Ao-bu and Qian Tang Ao-bu

Inscriptions above the 'roof':

❶ west;

❷ south;

❸ position of the *Zai Shou* posture;

❹ step;

❺ east;

❻ north.

Inscriptions under the 'roof':

❼ take a step left, stamping the left foot on the ground at this spot; then take another step approximately 40-45 cm to the left;

❽ take a step right and stamp the right foot on the ground at this spot;

❾ point the right toes northwest; then take another step right and stamp the right foot on the ground at this spot;

❿ next take a third step left toward the southwest and stamp the left foot on the ground at this spot; the *Chu Shou* step should be taken up to this spot, while the *Zai Shou* position is also at this spot;

⓫ take another wide step about 70-75 cm to the left;

⓬ draw the right foot beside the left and stamp it on the ground;

⓭ the *Chu Shou* position: the first left step is abou about 35-40 cm southwest.

Inscriptions in the figure at the bottom:

⓮ left hand: left hand doesn't move;

⓯ right hand: the right hand moves in leftward rotation from behind.

The left arm is stretched forward with the left hand lifted slightly up, palm facing west, while the right hand rests beside the left forearm. The right hand moves up and backward, then forward again in a striking motion under the left wrist, the back of the right hand facing up.

Exert your strength in the right hand strike, rolling the right fist forward to 7-8 *cun* in front of the left ribs. Concentrate the whole body's intrinsic force into the powerful right strike. During sparring, never strike roughly or carelessly. Where does the *jin* force of the strike come from? It emerges from the right foot stamping on the ground, which activates *jin* force up the right heel along the right leg to the crotch area and spine, rising as a cluster to the right shoulder to travel along the outside of the right arm to the fist, then releasing outward. Though we say that the strike is created using strength, it is in fact entirely dependent on the mobilization of *jin* force from the heel up to the rest of the body. The mechanism for this mobilization lies in the mind/heart, which causes *Zhong-qi* to issue from the Dan-tian to reach the hand, running throughout the whole body and involving the entire system of bodily resources. This is the true source of the strength unleashed to opponents, near or far.

If an opponent stands at a distance, you will need to stretch your arm to reach him adequately. For a opponent in closer proximity, this is not necessary. Hence keep your arm bent at the elbow to achieve the maximum impact for your strike without expending the energy of a full attack, thus saving your internal resources. This stance illustrates the superiority and difficulty of restrained action, since a distant attack is easier to execute than one which is short and carefully reserved. You will need to practice a lot to achieve this through your own *gong-fu*.

3. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The preceding *Qian Tang Ao-bu* form is connected with hexagram Fu (24), symbol of *yang*'s day of birth, when thunder dwells in the midst of earth. The current *Yan Shou Gong Chui* posture corresponds to hexagram Zhen (51), symbol of sudden movement, when thunder finally erupts to form the double thunder symbols of the Zhen hexagram.

When the upper and lower body are associated with thunder, no one can come close to the body due to its powerful hand strikes. Even if you do

not strike, the double thunder will burst forth in sudden attack to startle all within a hundred miles. When the right hand moves forward the body can advance; if it moves back, the body can be defended. This is a direct manifestation of the whole body's forces. As the saying goes:

> *"The movement like a crash of thunder terrifies all within a hundred miles. It startles the distant and frightens the near."*

Also,

> *"He who is fearful and always works on his fear will be like the sincere worshipper who is not startled into letting go his ladle and cup of sacrificial spirits. He makes his appearance and maintains his ancestral temple and the altars of the spirits of land and grain presiding at all sacrifices."*

This is the symbolic meaning of *Yan Shou Gong Chui*, and it determines its style of performance.

4. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture

In *Taiji* practice, *Jin-gang* merits great attention:
From head to toe it mobilizes a thousand pounds of force.
I would advise you to go to the greatest limits
In the intelligent sphere, resting or in the battlefield,
And the remaining force will be enough
To smash a thousand troops.

Posture 12

BUDDHA'S WARRIOR ATTENDANT POUNDS WITH PESTLE

Jin-gang Dao Dui

First, draw the right foot to the left, stamping beside it with the torso facing west. Then turn north with both hands drawing a circle, as if revealing wings. The left leg is empty while supporting the solid right leg. Remember that the three pounding actions of the *Jin-gang* posture is also called 'Magnificent Peak Rides Over Mount Kunlun'. Once the crotch is opened, the circulating energy emerges by itself to fill the body with the purest spirit.

Looking graceful and respectful, the body embodies chaos, emptiness and divinity — all the myriad things of a single mind. Stillness and silence is contained in this 'outwardly clumsy person,' who knows that *yin* and *yang* are re-united in the body. It is difficult to close-in on the practitioner from any direction. Even if opponents dare to breach the defense with an agressive attack, they will inevitably be defeated, drowning in the depths of the practitioner's spirituality. Mired in difficulty, as if stranded precariously atop a large steep boulder, the opponent has with no way to advance nor retreat, or even standing still. Finding himself in such a dangerous situation, he is filled with pangs of regret and failure. Is there a better way to address the situation? The only thing you can do is to cultivate your *gong-fu* by overcoming difficulties. Simply by relying on opening and closing, one stroke will smash a thousand enemy troops.

1. Diagram of the posture

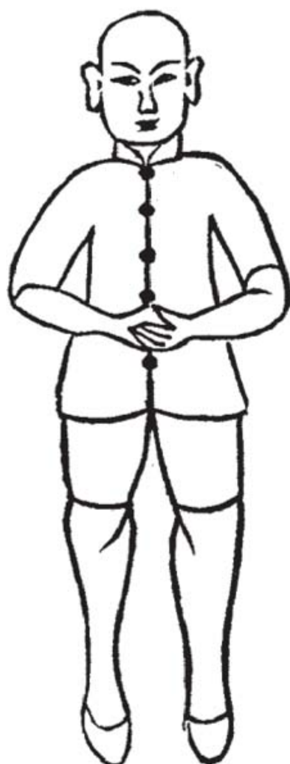


Fig. 1.12.1 Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle (Jin-gang Dao Dui)

2. Path of the hands in Jin-gang Dao Dui

Place the left hand in front of the chest, rotating in in a full circle. Bend the left arm at the elbow, palm facing up.

The illustrations in Fig. 1.12.2 depict the path of the hands in the current *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture. After striking westward, the right hand withdraws and stops in front of the right side of the chest. At the same time, draw a big circle with the left hand until it stops palm up at the lower abdomen to grasp the right fist in its palm.

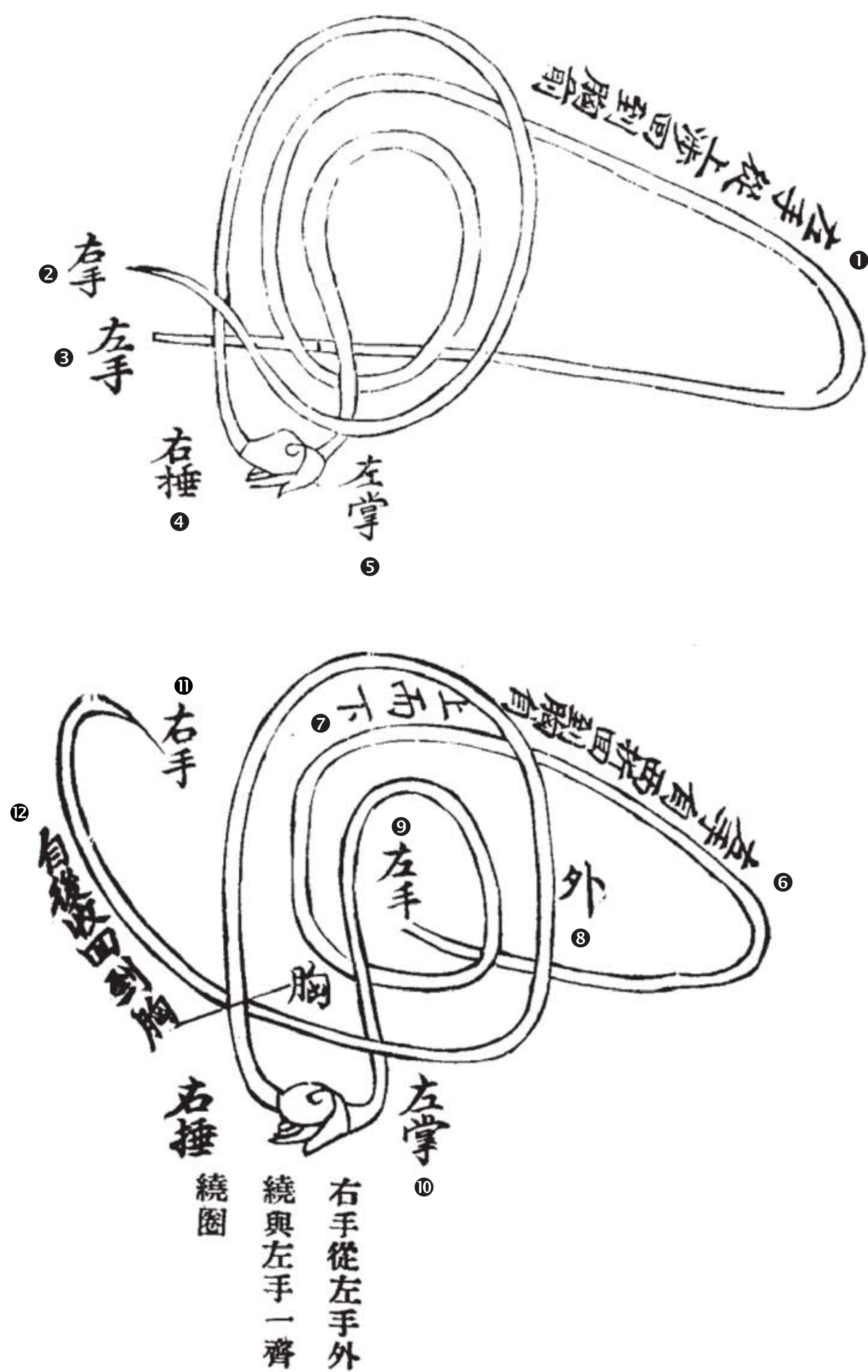


Fig. 1.12.2　Path of the hands in Jin-gang Dao Dui

a) Additional diagram of the path of both hands

Inscriptions to the upper figure:

❶ the left hand moves down from above until it stops in front of the chest;

❷ the path of the right hand;

❸ the path of the left hand;

❹ the left palm faces up;

❺ pounding with the right hand.

Inscriptions to the lower figure:

❻ the left hand moves down from the west until it stops in front of the chest;

❼ draw the right hand from the side to the front of the chest;

❽ chest;

❾ the path of the left hand; outward;

❿ the left palm faces up;

⓫ pounding with the right hand;

⓬ the right hand follows the left hand's circular movement and rotates outward in a parallel circle.

b) Diagram of the path of the feet

The diagram on Fig. 1.12.3 depicts the path of the feet in the third performace of *Jin-gang Dao Dui*.

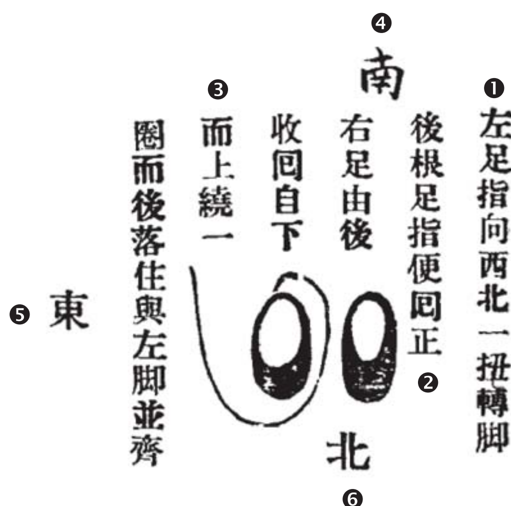


Fig. 1.12.3 Path of the feet in Jin-gang Dao Dui

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left toes point northwest;
- ❷ rotate the left foot on the heel until the toes point north;
- ❸ draw the right foot in an arc to flatten it in parallel beside the left foot;
- ❹ south;
- ❺ east;
- ❻ north.

The *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture has already been done twice. The second repeat follows the *Dan Bian* posture[66], which finishes with both arms spread out widely in opening. Since each opening must be followed by a closing, there is nothing better for that than *Jin-gang Dao Dui*. Therefore the *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture correlates with pure closing, which when brought to its full resolution, transforms into its opposite: opening.

[66] Single Whip.

In its third performance, *Jin-gang Dao Dui* follows *Yan Shou Gong Chui*, which finishes with the intrinsic forces (*shen* and *qi*) being completely released outward. And though there is a wide left step forward, both hands do fortunately meet each other at one place. However, when the left foot turns slightly on its heel to point the toes north, both hands simultaneously draw a circle downward from above, rotating from inside out, then moving up again.

When the right fist pounds like a pestle into the left palm 4-5 *cun*[67] away from the lower abdomen, the right foot lifts up then stamps down synchronously with the hands' thump. The merging effect of the *jing* essence blending, as described earlier, now changes slightly since duration is a more significant factor here: the period of release or opening must be equal to the period of gathering or closing. In fact, the doctrine of *yin-yang* is the natural manifestation of opening and closing. Hence the third performance of *Jin-gang Dao Dui* is used to gather in spirit emerging from the train of changes executed in the course of the *Taiji* routine.

Once you become aware of the agility and lightness of the posture's movements, you can return to the source of *Taiji*, which provides the ability to perceive the one common essence beneath all differences. This brings us to the topic of what lies beyond the principle of the intrinsic forces, which, unfortunately, is beyond the scope of this book.

4. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The preceding *Yan Shou Gong Chui* posture is used "to terrify all within a hundred miles," startling the distant and frightening the near. Since no one is carefree and happy within this posture, the subsequent *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture is allocated to hexagram Yu (16), symbol of harmonious joy, indicating that people can ultimately protect Supreme Harmony in the Yu state.

[67] about 12 cm.

Great will be the practitioner's success if she remains as firm as a rock for she will see things before they come to pass. This is shown by correct positioning, which indicates that all things and situations have been resolved adequately and correctly: movements are not restless nor abrupt, thus bringing the practitioner to the central place where pleasure and fulfillment can be found. But even if your motions are untimely, the central core will compensate with its stillness when your movement is complete, so that you may access heavenly Truth, as if to be nourished by heaven itself. Thus, boxing practice is still said to lead you to the source of the *Taiji* motif, and to a primitive but absolutely harmonious joy as indicated by hexagram Yu (16).

The first performance of *Jin-gang Dao Dui* faces north, the second faces west, and the third one faces north once more. Elegance of performance is determined by the concentration of spirit, which depends on the condition of the mind/heart. Once *qi* is calm and harmonized, this can be achieved.

End of Volume One

VOLUME TWO:

POSTURES 13-35

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Posture 13

SHIELD BODY AND PUNCH

Bi Shen Chui

This posture is a smooth extension of the *Jin gang Dao Dui* posture.

First, take a wide step about 1 *chi* and 4-5 *cun*[1] with the right foot, then turn the right shoulder to the right and downward in a semi-circle close to the right knee. After brushing the right shoulder over the right knee, move it upward and back in a closing leaning stance called *Kao* (Shoulder-stroke). This stance is quite difficult to perform as the shoulder passes 7 *cun*[2] over the knee. Despite leaning to the right, the right shoulder must be upright enough to brush eastward and up over the knee in a wide semi-circle. When it passes over the right knee, press the upper part of torso downward in a striking movement, your forehead pointing obliquely down. Then brush the left hand over the left knee, moving the hand back in a wide circle until it forks at the waist from the left.

This movement requires both hands to move synchronously: when the right hand moves forward, the left hand moves back; when the left hand is up, the right hand is down and vice versa, thus keeping the body balanced in between.

[1] about 45 cm.
[2] about 20 cm.

1. Diagram of the first half of Shield Body and Punch (Bi Shen Chui)



Fig. 2.13.1 First half of Shield Body and Punch (Bi Shen Chui)

Fig. 2.13.1 depicts the first half of *Bi Shen Chui*, which must be performed at one go to allow the mechanism of *qi* to work smoothly. Therefore the '7 *cun Kao* method[3]' is depicted here as follows: the upper body leans down to bring *Zhong-qi* and top energy[4] down. Don't lean too deeply, otherwise the connection between the upper body, the crotch and the waist will be lost. Dig both feet firmly into the ground — the more strongly the heels are pressed down the better. The right shoulder moves as if it wants to touch the ground. The distance between the face and knee is about 20 cm. If your opponent tries to press your head down, place your right foot between the opponent's legs if possible, so that your body forms a perpendicular line

[3] Translator's note: the first step in the *Bi Shen Chui* posture is critical to the success of the *Kao* shoulder strike, especially when the opponent is very close. The *Kao* strike can be divided into the shoulder and back techniques, where within the shoulder technique there exists elements of the back technique and vice versa. So when applying the shoulder technique, you must also be mindful of the back. Only by applying exact timing will you be able to fully unleash the power of the Kao technique. Like rock pounding against rock, all will be lost if there is no balance. Here, we see *Peng-jin* (Ward-off force) being sent through the shoulder to express itself as *Kao-jin* (Shoulder-stroke force).
[4] *Jing* essence focused at the top of the head.

to his body. Point your right shoulder at his lower abdomen to lift him up suddenly from below as if with a hook, then throw him off during exhalation. Exert your force through the shoulder. The energy of the Kao technique requires that the whole body works as an integrated unit.

2. *Description of the body positions*

The *Bi Shen Chui* posture provides the technique for turning around and looking backward. The torso faces west. Keep the head and neck upright and look downward to the front, toward the east.

Shift your weight slightly forward onto the right half of the body and feel the whole body working as one unit.

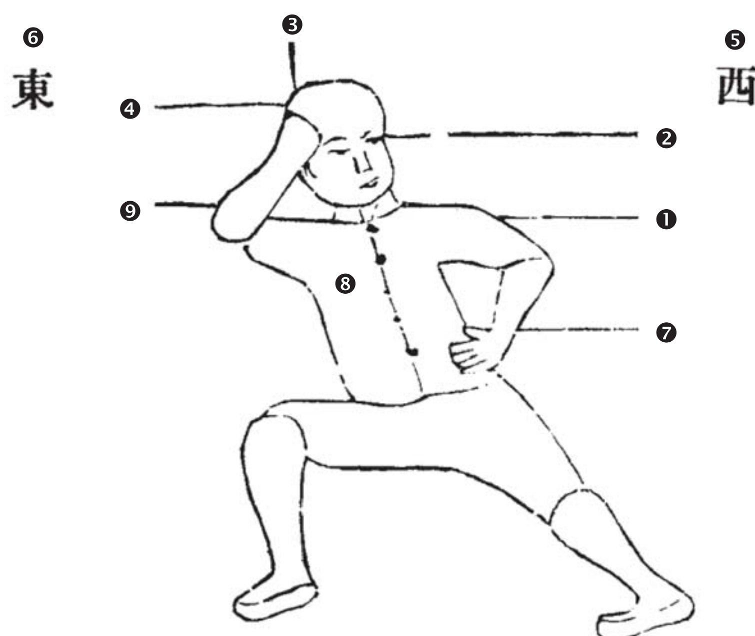


Fig. 2.13.2 Description of the body positions

Inscriptions:

❶ the left and right elbows accumulate *jing* essence; the elbow tip extends outward, pointing west;

❷ look down and focus your attention on the left toes;

❸ focus *jing* essence energy at the top of the head so that *Zhong-qi* sinks down to the coccyx;

❹ slant the torso east and rotate the waist west; bow forward so that the head is between both arms and aligned in a straight line with the shoulders; needless to say, the relaxed shoulders and arms should be sunk down; don't lift the shoulders as this would make the heart area hollow and agile;

❺ west;

❻ east;

❼ both hands are aligned with the face to gather *shen* (spirit) and *jing* essence in one movement; the waist's *jing* essence is positioned downward and slightly rotated west;

❽ gather the chest to establish a connection with the *jing* essence of both elbows;

❾ when punching, the right hand is in a straight line while the left hand presses on the left side of the waist; the *jing* essence of both the chest and elbows are linked together.

The posture is performed facing north, so north is the main direction from beginning to end; the person pictured on this page faces also northward.

3. *Diagram of jing essence regenerated in Bi Shen Chui*

Fig. 2.13.3 depicts the posture's position oriented north.

The right elbow is bent, drawing forward to make an oblique path with the extended left elbow tip. If the movement is well formed, the *jing* essence of

both arms will connect to produce *Zhong-qi*, which passes through the top of the head and along the spine down to the 21st vertebra.

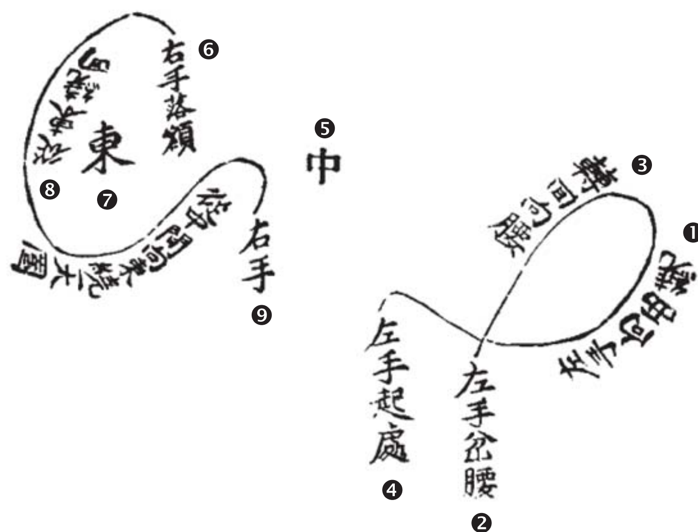


Fig. 2.13.3 Diagram of jing essence regenerated in Bi Shen Chui

Inscriptions:

❶ starting point of left hand's movement;
❷ the left hand coils westward;
❸ turn round toward waist;
❹ fork the waist with left hand;
❺ the center [between left and right arms];
❻ the right hand coils from the middle toward the east in a big circle;
❼ east;
❽ from the east it coils back;
❾ the right hand stops in front of the right side of the forehead.

The name of the *Bi Shen Chui* posture indicates that the stroke is performed with the back while turning the torso around. In fact, the posture is divided into the shoulder and back techniques, wherein within the shoulder technique some elements of the back technique are also applied. Fully exploited, the posture explodes like the pounding of a pestle. Carefully maintain the center of your gravity to succeed, if not, no achievement is possible. As for the position of the feet, the requirements are generally the same as for other postures.

4. Diagram of internal jing essence



Fig. 2.13.4 Diagram of internal jing essence

Inscriptions:

❶ the right shoulder drops down to the level of the opponent's chest;

❷ now the right shoulder turns around;

❸ now it moves outward;

❹ now it moves up.

When performing this posture, you must employ your whole body's strength in order to strike and turn the torso simultaneously. When making the Shoulder-stroke, you should focus mainly on accumulating *jing* essence of the whole body instead of employing your shoulder's strength. If the opponent grasps your upper elbow with both hands, try to close-in on him by leaning forward and pointing your right shoulder straight into his chest. First move the right shoulder outward so as to turn it sharply backward into the Shoulder-stroke, rotating the arm as an option. If the opponent is not deterred, try the posture depicted in Fig. 2.13.4 again. The point is that the strike can only be effected successfully after *jin* force is accumulated through closing.

5. *Shield Body and Punch (Bi Shen Chui) or Split Body and Punch*

The *Bi Shen Chui* posture refers to the covered punch, while its other name, *Pi Shen Chui* (Split Body and Punch), implies that both hands split the body into two equal halves, the left and right as well as upper and lower parts.

Another name for the posture is 'Turn Body and Punch,' referring to its continuation from *Jin gang Dao Dui*, when the right hand leads the right foot in taking a step eastward to the right. After this step, lean the upper body downward by bending and rotating the waist. Simultaneously turn the head back and look at the left toes. The right side of the chest is drawn forward to turn around an imaginary pivot located in the middle of the torso which 'splits' the body into two halves. Slightly bend the torso at the waist to allow *Zhong-qi* to flow upright. Point the right toes northwest, drawing the right knee inward to hold the closing stance. The left toes are in a hook foot stance pointing northeast. Look down at the left toes.

After taking a step right, bend the torso at the waist to bring the right shoulder down to above knee level using a brush-knee gesture. The downward shoulder movement must be performed naturally, matching your

ability to bend down from the waist; otherwise the movement will become rigid.

When stepping with the right foot, move the right hand down in an arc pointing east and slightly backward to draw two-thirds of a circle. Then rotate the torso at the waist to turn backward and punch at forehead level, the back of your hand facing up. Meanwhile, the left hand moves down and backward in a big circle to brush the left knee and fork[5] at waist from the left.

Leaning against the waist, extend the left elbow out, pointing the elbow tip forward to form a line of energy connecting with the right elbow tip at the forehead level. Both elbow tips are tightly bound with internal force. The same invisible line can be stretched between both hands above and below. Keep your head upright, hollow the chest and dig both heels into the ground. Don't tense up and pull the waist in. Instead relax the waist into a round shape, linking its energy with those of the knees and feet, then linking it with the body as a whole. Don't dissipate the spiritual substance but accumulate it by nurturing the soft *qi* flowing in a protective manner throughout your body.

The current posture can also be used to defend against rear attacks. If an opponent attacks you from the east by coming closely from behind, retreat slightly backward to turn the right shoulder in the 'force accumulating' method, pouring force down the left elbow tip and releasing it outward into the opponent's lower abdomen. Magnification of this explosion of energy is achieved by splitting the body, the right hand moving suddenly to the level of the forehead to align sturdily with the left hand and left toes. The splitting gesture of *Bi Shen Chui* provides effective defense against simultaneous attacks from multiple opponents.

[5] Fork at the waist: the hand rests at the waist with four fingers in front and the thumb facing backward.

6. Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the 'Shield Punch' of the Posture

The right shoulder moves back in a small retreat
To turn accumulated force into a harsh punch.
The punch is pointed exactly at the lower abdomen,
The explosive effect of which is used to inflict a serious wound.

7. Seven-character a line song dedicated to the posture

Bi Shen Chui is the hardest posture to explain:
The transverse distance between the feet is 3 *chi*[6].
Both arms are separated in a quick and energetic reverse motion,
While both legs accumulate force in the spiral reeling.
The right fist rests above acupoint Shen-ting at the forehead;
The left fist rests at the waist on the left side (alternatively, as an open hand).
The body resembles a sideways sleeping posture
Slightly rotated inward; look at the left toes
To demonstrate the concentration of spirit.
Accumulate the force at the top of the head
To guide the meeting of corners with cardinal directions;
Round-in the crotch and hold the knees in a half moon shape.
The right shoulder strikes down in a *7-cun* Shoulder-stroke,
Straighten the back in a strike to hit the target on the mark.
Withdraw the right hand to make another punch
Within the framework of the *Taiji* transformations,
Clenching the palm into a fist for a while, to be unclenched in proper time.

[6] 1 metre.

The back of the body is allocated to *yang*, while the chest and abdomen to *yin*. Both hands turn in reverse direction (indicating that *jing* essence accumulates as *yin* substance), until both arms move explosively to wound the opponent. While turning right, *yin* turns into *yang* to afflict the opponent with *yang* substance. *Bi Shen Chui* corresponds to closing or accumulation of the essential force[7] in stillness to burst forth into sudden counter-attack. From stillness to movement, draw down in a slanting arc, then let the torso follow the right hand so that the back of the body makes an explosive strike. As the shoulder moves down, the right hand draws a circle; as the body turns, the back performs the *Kao* technique. The right hand guides the body into a turn to let *qi* flow freely through the upper and lower body. While moving in the *Kao* technique with the right Shoulder-stroke, the left hand moves forward and upward from behind to support the right hand's movement. Both hands must move synchronously and naturally to prevent the opponent from developing his attack.

When the shoulder and elbow become filled with *qi*, draw them backward to prepare for counter-attack. Face the right palm downward to switch from the pure *yang* of attack (opening) to the *yin-yang* accumulation (closing) of *jing* essence. Before drawing the shoulder backward, accumulate the force in stillness prior to exploding into an eastward punch toward the opponent's lower abdomen. The sequence of 'stillness-to-movement' then returns to 'movement-to-stillness'. This cycle repeats unceasingly, so what else needs to be added? Thus, 'movement-stillness' and 'opening-closing' alternate repeatedly in the unrelenting drive for boxing mastery. Power obtained without conscious effort is not true power and can easily be lost. Hence your ability to completely vanquish opponents depends entirely on the quality of your conscious practice.

[7] Jing essence.

8. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The final movement of the current posture has the right hand positioned upward and the left hand forked at the waist. The right elbow tip points east while the left points north. The right toes face east while the left toes face west. Acupoint Qi-hai faces north while acupoint Hua-gai faces northwest after rotation. Look downward at the final stance. Acupoint Tian-ting faces west with the toes pointing northeast. This posture signifies that the upper and lower body are held apart, a concept derived from trigram Li (30), symbol of brightness and sunrise. Trigram *Li* is strong outside (two undivided bottom and topmost lines) but empty inside (a divided line in the center), indicating that all four limbs are strong. This means that the mind/heart is empty. Such emptiness illuminates the full meaning of this posture through the image of a divided line in the center of trigram *Li,* which shows its subject attending to or being subordinated by others in his central place, which is symbolically decorated with the brightness of yellow, a colour also known for its connotations of centrality. The great good fortune of the aforementioned subject of the line is derived from his right choice of associates and from holding fast to the course of the Golden Mean. Through boxing you are also be able to illuminate the principle of the Golden Mean through discipline and adherence to rules. The topmost undivided line shows the king employing his subjects for punitive actions against evil-doers: "Achieving admirable merit, he breaks only the chief of the rebels. Where the chief's prisoners are not rebels, he does not punish. Thus, there is no error."

The Kao[8] technique embodies 'the punitive actions' which restore order and bring situations to their proper states.

[8] Shoulder-strike.

Posture 14

Turn and Lean by Shoulder and Back

Bei She Kao

1. Diagram of the final movement of Split Body and Punch (Pi Shen Chui) performed as the Punch to Crotch (Zhi Dang Chui) posture

In the previous posture, we have already discussed the option of the *Pi* (or *Bi) Shen Chui's* final movement, which is depicted here. This stance should be easy to realize with the picture below.



Fig. 2.14.1 Diagram of the final movement of Split Body and Punch (Pi Shen Chui) performed as the Punch to Crotch (Zhi Dang Chui) posture

Inscriptions:

❶ after turning, the shoulder follows the right hand down;
❷ the right shoulder moves backward;
❸ the point where the shoulder turns and closes;
❹ the upper elbow;
❺ the forearm;
❻ the back of the right fist faces upward to accumulate sufficient power for the strike.

Translator's note:

Although the formal name for posture 14 is Bei She Kao, it consists of the final movement of Pi Shen Chui performed as the Punch to Crotch (Zhi Dang Chui) posture.

Posture 15

FIST BENEATH ELBOW

Zhou Di Kan Quan

1. Diagram of the posture

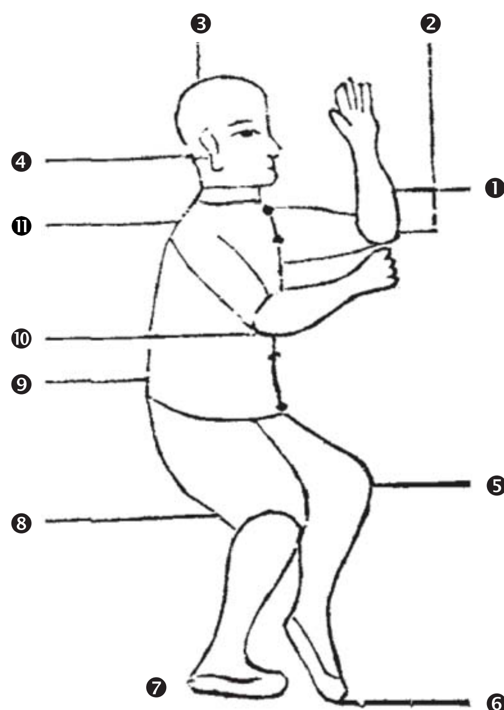


Fig. 2.15.1 Fist Beneath Elbow (Zhou Di Kan Quan)

Inscriptions:

❶ contain *jing* essence of the chest; the chest area is hollow and empty;

❷ bend the left elbow to keep the five ringers closed and pointing up;

❸ look at the right fist resting below the left elbow; raise the anus to let the whole body's *jing* essence rise to the top of the head, thus activating the force and spirit;

❹ as the opponent comes closer, first listen to any sounds of his approach; a rapid approach sounds like the wind blowing, while a slow approach is signaled in other ways which you should determine before he attacks; whilst a frontal attack can be easily seen, side or rear attacks can also be detected using the sensitivity of your organs and your intuition (also known as the 'sixth sense');

❺ bend the left knee to allow opening and closing of *jing* essence;

❻ draw the left foot into an empty left step and round-in the crotch;

❼ flatten the right foot on the ground;

❽ bend the right knee to synchronize opening and closing with the left knee;

❾ sink the waist *jing* essence down;

❿ draw the right elbow tip slightly out in a move called 'angular outside but round inside';

⓫ sink the right shoulder down and raise the forearm.

2. Old style performance of Fist Beneath Elbow (Zhou Di Kan Quan)

Draw the right hand from the east toward the direction of your steps.

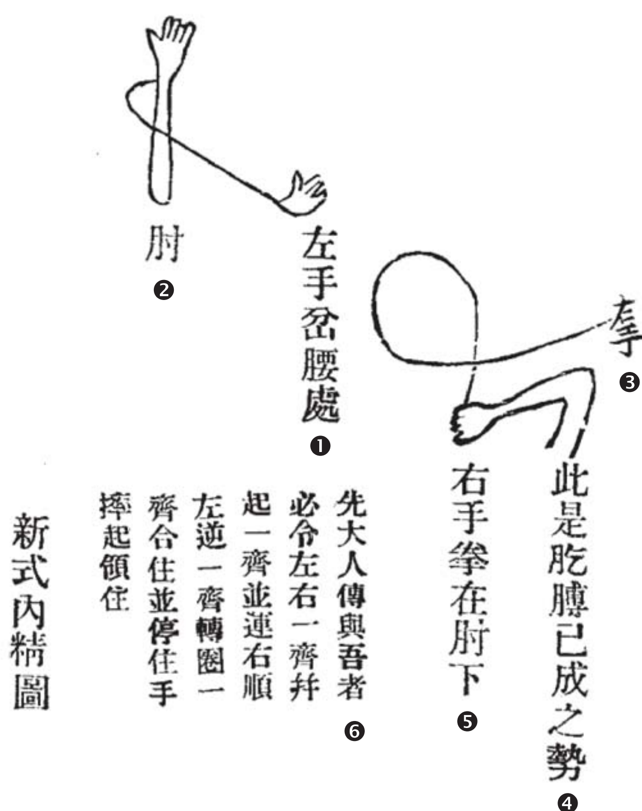


Fig. 2.15.2 Old style performance of Fist Beneath Elbow (Zhou Di Kan Quan)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left hand forks the waist from the left;
- ❷ elbow;
- ❸ the right hand;
- ❹ this is the final movement of the forearm;
- ❺ the right fist rests below the left elbow tip which points down;
- ❻ when face-to-face with a stronger opponent, you should raise both hands and move them in circles: the right hand in direct rotation while the left hand in reverse until both hands stop in front of the torso, which is kept in balance by the supporting right half of the body.

3. New style performance of Fist Beneath Elbow (Zhou Di Kan Quan)

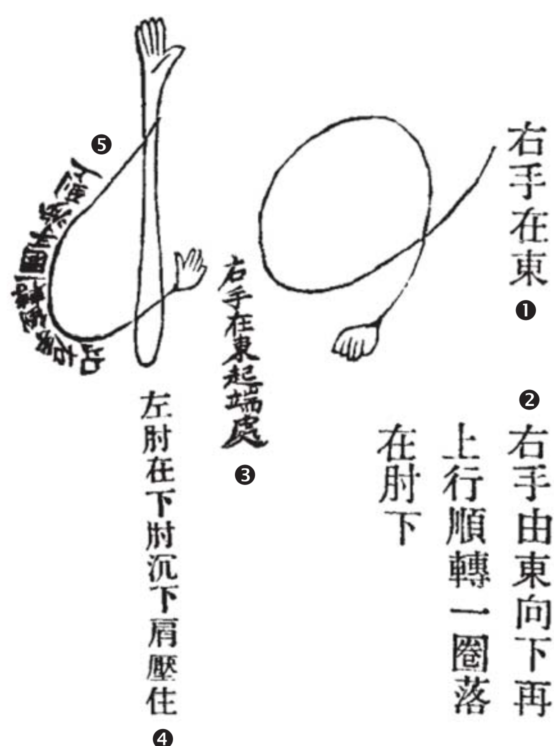


Fig. 2.15.3 New style performance of Fist Beneath Elbow (Zhou Di Kan Quan)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ place the right hand at the east;
- ❷ move right hand down then up again in direct rotation of a circle until it stops beneath the left elbow;
- ❸ the starting point of the right hand is at the east;
- ❹ lower the left elbow and sink the left shoulder down;
- ❺ the right hand moves up after drawing a circle.

As its name suggests, *Zhou Di Kan Quan* requires the right fist to rest beneath the left elbow. The right foot lies flat on the ground with toes pointing northeast. Then without lifting the right heel, re-adjust the right foot so that the toes now point west and slightly north.

Half of the sole stamps solidly on the ground. The left hand moves obliquely downward from north to south, then back again to the north in a circle. The left elbow is bent, elbow tip down, fingers pointing up. Withdraw the left foot from the west and place it 5-6 *cun*[9] beside the right. Bend the left knee to align it vertically with the left elbow tip. Turn the left knee slightly out to open the *jing* essence passing through the inside of the left leg, and close with the left foot drawn on the ground. The left toes are vertically aligned with the left knee and left elbow tip.

Before coiling silk thread energy, move the right hand from south to north in direct circular rotation, then return south to form a fist resting beneath the left elbow tip. Focus your eyes on the right fist. Bend the right knee and place it slightly out in opening. *Jing* essence passes along the inside of the leg up to the crotch. Hold the area between the buttocks and round up the crotch so that *jing* essence can flow up along the spine to the top of the head. At this point, the nape turns slightly northwest. Draw the chin in to contain the chest and slowly accumulate *qi* to fill up the whole body. Filling the body to the brim, *qi* is ready to overflow into the next posture. This very juncture, where *qi* flows without obstruction, marks the boundary between preceding and subsequent postures. Although the *Taiji* routine is performed as one uninterrupted movement, each posture has its opening and closing phrases wherein consecutive forms are divided by invisible lines.

The left hand of *Zhou Di Kan Quan* correlates with *yang*, the right hand with *yin*.The back of the right hand is associated with *yang*, the right palm with *yin*. It is common knowledge that surplus energy is generated in this posture. When the left hand moves up first in outward then inward ro-

[9] about 15 cm.

tation, this is called 'stillness within movement.' The drawn circle is also known as 'stillness within movement.'

The right hand moves from the east upward in direct circular rotation until it stops and gathers into a fist beneath the left elbow tip. This drawn loop also embodies 'stillness within movement.' Thus, the left hand moves down to reverse the flow of *jing* essence toward the roots of the fingers. *Jing* essence coils outward obliquely until it reaches the armpit, then continues reeling in and out in a number of spiral coils. Theoretically, the coils reach the root of the left fingers and stop there to reunite with the *jing* essence of the right hand. The right hand moves down, rotating in direct movement to bring *jing* essence to the finger-tips. *Jing* essence then reels in and out until its slanting coils reach the right armpit, then reverses in direction from inside out back toward the fingertips once more, where it comes to a rest to merge with the *jing* essence of the left hand.

If you wish to accumulate *jing* essence of the whole body through closing, you need to employ the silk-reeling technique. Without the internal accumulation of *jing* essence or regeneration of pre-birth internal force, the silk-reeling technique becomes only an empty external form. Hence if you do not coil the hands using the circular silk-reeling method, this means heart *qi* is disconnected from the entire process. In fact, there are no breaks in movement during the coiling of both hands — what is called 'stillness' really means 'slow release of movement', hence its other name, 'stopping without stoppage.'

What things, between heaven and earth with the nature of *yin* and *yang*, can stop their existence even for a little while? For even in hot midsummer a tiny *yin* exists in stillness within *yang*. Indeed, is there even the smallest moment where *yin* doesn't grow to dominate in winter? Even at rest, a person still breathes to circulate *qi* and blood to maintain metabolism and so on. Is it possible that substances may be completely immovable now but absolutely movable later? Is it so difficult to find proof of this concept? As Mencius states,

> *"Teaching others, a great master should follow the rules. He who follows the rules reaches the state of circumference[10] in affairs. From this point of view, to teach others is a big task for a great master who has reached the peak of mastery, but who cannot put herself in the place of a student, who is usually indifferent and careless in his studies."*

This means that to really follow the spirit of the rules, you need to take opportunities to escape from norms and standards in order to truly embody the rules and principles. To achieve this, one needs to be always dissatisfied, always searching. Conversely, satisfaction is a state of stagnation and leads to deterioration. As the saying goes, "One can never be perfect." It is also said, "Strive to be always dissatisfied, as satisfaction attracts damage." In other words, you should never lose your conscientiousness when following the rules. The products of your achievements, no matter how great or lacking, should never be taken into account.

4. Symbolic meaning of the posture

In the current posture, the body seems to be unconnected with half outstretched hands: the left fingers point up while the right fist rests beneath the left elbow tip. The hands lie parallel to the feet: the left foot is drawn on the ground in an empty left step, while the supporting right foot is flattened on the ground. However, all the sensitive organs and body structures are gathered into one integrated form of Truth (Thusness), as embodied by the double water[11] figure Kan (29), symbol of sinking and total (or double) peril.

Kan (29) shows sincerity at the core of its heart. The mind penetrates through this and any action in accordance with this quality will be of high value. The fifth strong and undivided line shows its subject as water, meaning that the strong and weak are sufficiently equally proportioned to create

[10] the merging of the square and circle.
[11] hexagram Kan (29) comprises of two water trigrams on top of each other.

a successful solution to escape from peril. In the case of total danger, defeat that is not yet absolute may still ebb away. However, the waters of peril at the center will very quickly accumulate enough strength to overcome all barriers in its path to return *qi* back to the Dan-tian, thus accumulating strength in the central position.

The repeated *Kan* trigrams symbolizes one perilous defeat following another. This is the nature of water — it flows over obstructions without getting stuck and presses on through perilous battles without losing its true nature. Hence the saying, "Sincerity is in the core of its heart." The penetrating mind of *Kan* is depicted by the strong lines at the centers of both trigrams, all pursuing the course of the Golden Mean. This symbolizes the existence of the real principle in your mind/heart, as well as of *Zhong-qi* accumulated in the Dan-tian. That is why we say, "Action in accordance with this will be of high value," meaning that any advance will be followed by achievement, as long as *Haoran Zhi Qi* is regenerated in the centers. The dangerous height of heaven cannot be ascended; the difficult places of earth are the mountains, rivers, hills, and mounds. Kings and princes use such strength to maintain their rule and territory over people. Great indeed is the usefulness of what is taught here about the seasons of peril.

The lower inner trigram of Kan (29) from the 2nd to 4th places is *Zhen* (thunder), which signifies *yang qi*, the embodiment of the dragon. The transformation of hands are also reflected in the dragon's movements, which intersect with trigram *Xun* (wind), the symbol of obedience.

Usually, calamity follows calamity, and can only be changed through the interaction of *Kun* and *Qian*, weak outside but strong inside — this is the true form of *Taijiquan*. Although it looks difficult, this is achieved through *Zheng-qi* produced from *Qian* and *Kun* and comes entirely free from worry and vexation. Hence what sort of fear could it have in the face of hexagram Kan (29)[12]? If you wish to master boxing, you need to maintain one-pointed focus to build your skills and finally emerge into the mainstream,

[12] symbol of peril.

free from obstructions and obstacles. The Kan (29) hexagram is formed by the repeated representation of water, which flows on continuously and signifies that *Zhong-qi* is true and is the only Truth. Therefore when it interacts with the Li (30) hexagram, the true brightness of mind/heart can only become brighter.

5. Four-characters a line verse dedicated to Zhou Di Kan Quan

Keep the left hand up and the right hand down;
Keep the chest hollow and control the situation all around.
Draw the left foot toward the right, flattening it on the ground;
Both legs are bent at the knees; keep the crotch round and open.
Shen is full, *qi* energy overflows;
This is the only Truth and nothing is false.
Hold the upper body and withdraw the lower,
And the whole posture will take on a classic elegance.

6. Five-character a line preliminary verse

The image of a macaque and the peach of immortality
Hanging beneath its elbow. It dares to look at it,
But dares not taste it, resting quietly for rejuvenation
Through the nature granted to it from the heavens.

Posture 16

Step Back and Whirl Arms like a Coiling Silk Thread

Dao Juan Hong

The *Dao Juan Hong* posture can be performed in the old style, chest bent down to 2 *chi*[13] from the ground. However, there is a preference nowadays to practice the simplified form of the posture, said to be more effective. Nevertheless, the diagram for this posture depicts the old form so that the original style is retained.

1. Diagram of the posture

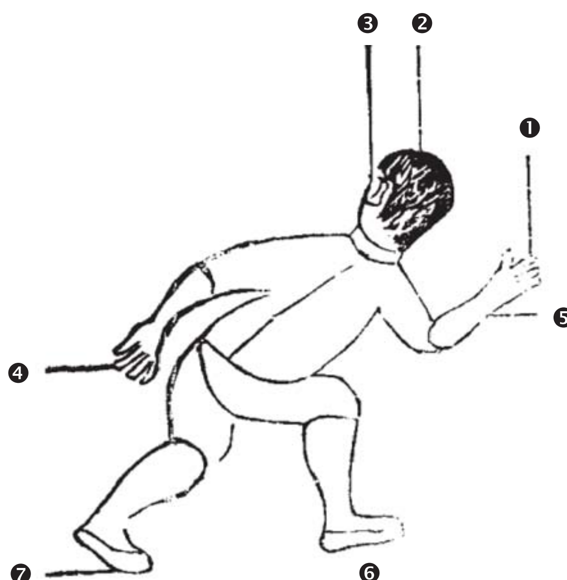


Fig. 2.16.1 Step Back and Whirl Arms like a Coiling Silk Thread (Dao Juan Hong)

[13] about 60 cm.

Inscriptions:

❶ the right hand moves up to face level, the right elbow and fingers slightly bent;

❷ the body is opened[14] out wide, which facilitates *jing* essence accumulating at the top of the head;

❸ focus your attention on the left side of the stance and on the left foot, since its position drawn on the ground is not quite stable and reliable;

❹ place the left hand behind the left side of the torso, left elbow slightly bent, fingers slightly spread apart as if carrying something with a cupped hand;

❺ the spine straightens the body outward and bends it down from the waist in a wide step backward;

❻ flatten the right foot on the ground;

❼ draw the left foot toward the ground, digging firmly into it; take a wide step back. *Dao Juan Hong* is a retreating posture taken after *Zhou Di Kan Quan*; it then links to *Bai E Liang Chi*[15]. So take a left step backward and draw the left foot on the ground behind the body in a retreating move, to form the dividing line between *Dao Juan Hong* and the following *Bai E Liang Chi* posture.

2. *Diagrams of body movements*

The *Dao Juan Hong* posture requires that the left half of the body moves in reverse rotation to reel *jin* force (as depicted in Fig. 2.16.2), while the right hand and right half of the body move backward to also reel *jin* force in the same manner as the left hand. The left hand draws a big circle from its position on the left, moving upward and forward until it stops slightly above the level of the head.

[14] To 'open' the body out wide means to open all parts of the body in order to accumulate energy (in closing) while inhaling.
[15] The 'White Crane Reveals Its Wings' posture.

A) Intrinsic force moving upwards in the left hand



Fig. 2.16.2 Intrinsic force moving upwards in the left hand

Inscriptions:

❶ diagram of intrinsic force moving upwards in the left hand;

❷ left hand.

B) Positions of the left and right feet

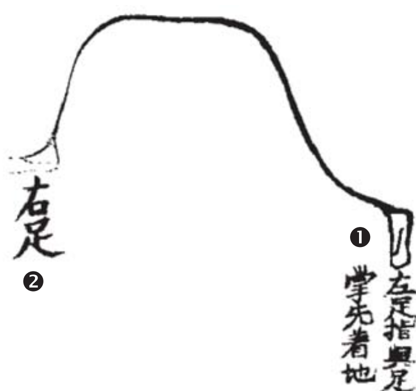


Fig. 2.16.3 Positions of the left and right feet

Inscriptions:

❶ the left toes touch the ground, digging firmly into it;

❷ the right foot.

c) Intrinsic jin force moving downwards in the left hand



Fig. 2.16.4 Intrinsic jin force moving downwards in the left hand

Inscriptions:

❶ the left hand is placed upward and forward;

❷ The left hand moves down and backward in a reverse movement;

❸ the left hand moves down and backwad in *jin* force reeling until it stops at this place;

❹ the position of the left foot;

❺ the position of the right foot;

❻ move in an arc in the form of a newborn moon.

3. *The Dao Juan Hong posture*

This posture requires taking a step backward, while the hand moves down and back in reverse rotation of the silk-reeling method, eschewing sensitivity for the full strength of attack through retreat. Hence the derivation of its name, "Step Back and Whirl Arms like a Coiling Silk Thread."

The *jing* essence of the roots of the fingers reels from inside downward, then outside and upward, then repeats the cycle in a reverse reel to regenerate *jing* essence. This is the slanting silk-reeling method, which starts from the armpit, moving in a spiral coil along the arm toward the palm, then back toward the armpit. It then moves from the armpit downward and outward, then up and inward in a slanting coil back to the roots of the fingers.

The body moves in a semi-circle when the foot retreats as the hand moves backward. First, the left hand goes behind the torso, then moves forward and upward in a circle until it stops in front at the level of the head. At this point, the right hand moves backward to counter-balance the left hand in front of the body. Again, when the left hand moves backward and down, the right hand moves forward and up before continuing in the opposite direction. Once the left hand moves backward and down, the left foot takes a wide step[16] backward too. Then the right foot takes a step backward, the right hand following it with a backward circle, thereby switching the left hand and left foot to the front of the body. All four limbs maintain balance in their opposing positions, which rotate in a reverse direction of a cartwheel, that is, as the cartwheel progresses forward, the hands alternate each other in whirling backward.

Again, step the right foot backward past the side of the left foot, and draw the left foot on the ground to form a left bow step[17]. At the same time,

[16] about 1 metre.
[17] this means that the front leg is bent at the knee while the rear leg is extended (but not completely).

rotate the right forearm outward, pulling the right elbow back until the right palm stops beside the right hip. Simultaneously, raise the left hand in a backward semi-circle to the level of the left temple, palm down and fingers obliquely forward, then push it forward past the left ear over the right forearm. Continue pushing the left hand forward, while the right elbow pulls back until the right hand stops beside the right hip, palm obliquely up and fingers pointing forward.

Step the left foot backward past the side of the right foot, and draw the right foot on the ground to form a right bow step. As the torso turns left, bend the right arm and move the hand up to the level of the right temple past the right ear, then push it forward over the left forearm. Continue pushing the right hand forward whilst at the same time pulling the left hand back to the waist, palm down and fingers pointing forward. Keep the torso, waist and hips relaxed.

4. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The current posture is one of retreat, the chest and abdomen areas remaining in the front position. The *Kun* (2) figure, symbol of double earth and the submissive official, correlates with the abdomen. As the explanation of the entire figure[18] says, "When the superior person intends to make any move here, if he takes the initiative, he will go astray." Therefore he retreats, as he doesn't know what lies in front. The Book of Changes also explains, "If [the superior person] takes the initiative, he goes astray, as he misses what is his proper way. If he follows, he is docile and gets into his regular course." Since the position of his feet is the main element of the posture correlating with earth, the hands follow the feet to maintain the proper course.

[18] The explanation for each of the hexagrams was composed by King Wen and is known as the Tuan.

In the lowest divided line denotes that the superior person is "treading cautiously on thin ice. The strong ice will come by and by." This means that he retreats in a very cautious and defensive manner to protect himself and escape disaster, as if treading on thin ice.

The second divided line suggests that the subject has attributes of "being straight, square and great". This line's movement originates from the straight line toward the unlimited square, meaning that a retreating move using the current posture should be executed with straight *qi* in the mind/heart, to be used without limit. "Its operation, without repeated efforts, will be advantageous in every respect." This line shows that no harm is done despite retreat due to the wonderful support of earth.

The third divided line shows the superior person to be "keeping his excellence under restraint, but firmly maintaining it". This means that his chest is like bamboo, hollow and empty inside but upright and firm outside, in readiness for the proper time to manifest his mastery. Hence it is said, "If he should have occasion to engage in the king's service, though he will not claim the success for himself, he will bring affairs to good issue under the guidance of his king through retreat, saving the army from defeat." Great is the glory of his wisdom!

The fifth divided line denotes "the yellow lower garment. There will be great good fortune". As the commentary[19] by the Duke of Chou explains, "This follows from that ornamental colour being in the right and central place of the upper trigram." This means that in the center of the abdomen lies the proper representation of distinction, brightness and beauty.

Despite retreat, the *Dao Juan Hong* posture has no harmful ramifications. The topmost divided line denotes dragons fighting in the wild. This means that retreat is accompanied with whirling arms to drive away the opponent's attack. The Duke's commentary adds that "their blood is dark and yellow", as if the opponents' strength is reinforced with blades. Hence there

[19] This was added by Confucius's followers.

remains only one solution — to retreat in good order, driving away their attacks and thus saving the army from harm.

The topmost line also denotes that "the onward course indicated by *Kun* is pursued to its extremity." This means that *yang* is great while *yin* is small; thus *Kun* interacts with *Qian* in consolidating the course of the Golden Mean to extremity. Hence it is said, "If those who are thus represented are perpetually correct and firm, advantages will arise without fail." This means there will be a great consummation of good fortune.

A supplementary explanation of the entire figure and separate lines says that, "What is indicated by *Kun* is most gentle and weak, but when applied in movement, is hard and strong. It is most still, but is able to give every definite virtue and form." Hence retreat is beyond anticipation. The subject of the fifth and topmost lines is the superior person who by following, finds his proper master, pursues his proper course and occupies the proper position for his body. All his limbs follow the course of beauty. The beauty of whirling and retreat manifests in movement, where the left hand follows the left foot while the right hand follows the right foot. The upper and the lower body follow each other in accordance with hexagram Sui (17), the symbol of obedience and following. So in Sui (17), we see how the strong lower trigram for thunder obediently comes and places itself under the weak symbol for marsh. Hence we see in Sui (17) the two attributes of movement (thunder) and pleasure (marsh). This perspective is also adapted in the posture.

5. Free verse dedicated to the Dao Juan Hong posture

Just look at the genuine pearl called *Dao Juan Hong*:
Zheng-qi penetrates its midst.
Yin and yang come and go replacing each other.
According to the mechanism of the posture's movement,
Watch right and left while retreating in good order,
Without deflection or interruption, but continuously,
Like two cartwheels going round and round…
Don't face up; don't cast your eyes down;
Don't toss your legs down; don't lift them up.
Watch attentively and ward-off both sides:
The left and right arms are truly indeed
getting the Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*.
So whirl both arms in perfect circles.

6. Five-character a line verse dedicated to the posture

To take a step usually means to advance,
But this posture is just to retreat.
Both arms are like the sun and moon
Alternating each other in silence.

Posture 17

WHITE CRANE REVEALS ITS WINGS (2ND PERFORMANCE)

Bai E Liang Chi

Once again, the white crane spreads out its right wing by raising both hands and sinking the elbows in such a way as to protect the torso from both sides. Lower the shoulders and straighten the arms slightly in the likeness of an eyebrow's arc so as to refresh and revitalize the activity of the mind/heart. Both hands point north and the elbows are bent in the shape of a new moon. The right foot draws right in a semi-circle while the left foot takes an empty step in readiness to counter-attack at the appropriate time. Meanwhile, the mechanism of reaction stands by on alert, ready to be activated when necessary.

1. Five-character a line verse dedicated to the posture

In between the preceding *Dao Juan Hong*
And the following *Lou-xi Ao-bu* postures,
The mechanism of the mind/heart just rotates once
For the right hand to start its ceaseless activity.

The silk-reeling method of energy regeneration links with all the other methods, and is similar to the first performance of *Bai E Liang Chi*.

2. *Diagram of the posture*



Fig. 2.17.1 The 2nd performance of White Crane Reveals Its Wings (Bai E Liang Chi)

The left foot takes an empty step and draws 3-5 *cun*[20] beside the right foot on the ground in preparation for the subsequent *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture. Step the right foot northwest and set it on the ground behind the left heel to form a left bow step. Then draw the left foot back and set it on the ground behind the right heel to form a right bow step. Next, the right foot takes a semi-circular step outward, right toes touching the ground, while the left foot draws past the side of the right foot in a left empty step.

Both knees are bent. Place the left foot east in a state of readiness while the right foot is flattened slightly behind it. The right leg takes an empty right step with the left leg carrying the main weight of the body. The left foot comes to a rest, touching the ground with its toes in front of the right foot, then takes an easy step left to support the upper and lower parts of the body. For a more detailed explanation, refer to the first description of the *Bai E Liang Chi* posture.

[20] about 10-12 cm.

3. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The current *Bai E Liang Chi* posture corresponds to the situation where the left hand and elbow follow the right ones, but the left foot follows the right foot in the image of figure Dui (58), the symbol of joy. Under the condition of Dui (58), the number two is compared to three, while three is contrasted with four, and four with five. Therefore hexagram Dui (58) embodies the state of pleased satisfaction in the mind/heart and kidneys. This is also reflected in the central lines of each of the Dui trigrams (that is, double marsh trigrams) that comprise the Dui (58) hexagram, and in the fact that the second strong undivided line corresponds to the strong fifth one. The hands and feet correlate with the third and topmost weak or divided lines, and they represent the sincere heart with which one meets others.

Although weak outside, the center of Dui (58) is bolstered with strong lines that give the sense that joy is made of truly firm substance inside, as reflected by the bottom and middle lines. The weak lines on the outer edge of the two trigrams suggest that in pleasure situations, it is best to maintain firmness and correctness. As one interpretation for Dui (58) explains, "Through this there will be found an accord with the will of heaven and a concordance with the feelings of men." In terms of the posture, it is as if you move your arms with your heart in full accordance with the posture's requirements. By whirling your arms in circles, you manifest the course of heaven as symbolized by the upper *Dui* trigram.

Kidneys contain volition, while the feet follow volition in accordance with the posture's demands. Drawing a semi-circle, you manifest the course of a person corresponding to the lower *Dui* trigram. The lowest undivided line shows the pleasure of inward harmony, while the second undivided line shows the pleasure arising from inward sincerity. The undivided line shows its subject disturbing his relationship with the subject of the weak (third) line below and he is not at rest , while the topmost divided line shows the pleasure of its subject in trying to attract the subjects of the two strong lines below through the sincerity of his heart. He deliberates with the oth-

ers with his externally gentle and agreeable manner, using positive energy to attract people to him, making their solid energy yield to his soft one.

This is the true purpose of the posture — to embody the *jing* essence of attraction (*yin*). Hence it is allocated to hexagram Dui (58), which embodies the meaning of pleased satisfaction. When faced and led with such pleasure, people forget their toil; when it inspires them in the face of difficulties, they forget the risk of death. Hence the mind/heart of humans plays the commanding role, while the four extremities carry out its orders in the image of hexagram Bi (8). Bi (8) is the symbol of inferior assistance and affectionate relationship, where we see subordinates following their superior obediently, as reflected in the strong fifth line. The explanation for the entire figure says:

> *"The name Bi denotes mutual aid and an affectionate relationship. We see in the figure subordinates following their superiors docilely. Let the principal parties participating in it re-examine themselves, as if implementing their first divination, to see if their virtues are great, firm and assiduous. If it is so, there will be no error, as all this follows from the position of the strong fifth line in the center of the upper trigram. Those whose minds are not at rest will come to him — high and low will respond to its subject."*

In the current posture, the four limbs follow the mind/heart, thus activating all the sensitive organs and bodily structures pleased to follow in the correct arrangement. Therefore hexagram Bi (8) is also applied in this posture to enable *Zheng-qi* of *Qian* and *Kun* to flourish.

Posture 18

Brush Knee and Twist Step

Lou-xi Ao-bu

This performance of *Lou-xi Ao-bu* requires the right hand to coil forward in a blocking stance, while the left hand coils behind the back into a hook hand gesture, fingertips gathered together for the same purpose of blocking. The right hand lies about 35-40 cm in front of the chest, while the left hand rests behind about 18-20 cm from the middle part of the waist, remaining connected to the all-embracing chest due to *Zheng-qi* of *Qian* and *Kun*.

Once your mind/heart is calm and settled, your gaze becomes peaceful and quiet. Look at the middle finger-tip of the right hand in front of the chest to concentrate *jing* essence and maintain roundness in all parts of the body. Therefore you need to empty both knees to accumulate *jing* essence of the feet in closing. Turn the big toes of both feet slightly inward, flattening the soles firmly on the ground as required in the first performance of *Lou-xi Ao-bu*.

1. Diagram of the posture



Fig. 2.18.1 The 2nd performance of White Crane Reveals Its Wings (Bai E Liang Chi)

Inscriptions:

❶ *jing* essence of both arms coils from outside in;

❷ *jing* essence of both feet employs the essence of both legs to create the all-embracing method of accumulation by coiling from outside in.

2. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture is oriented toward the four cardinal directions and hence has meanings associated with *Qian*, *Kun*, *Kan* and *Li*. Nevertheless, deeper meanings of this posture may be possible in boxing, where the merit and competence of a practitioner is determined by the uprightness and respectfulness displayed in every situation and undertaking, and by his ability to exercise modesty and decency over complacency and self-satisfaction.

Hence *Lou-xi Ao-bu* is allocated to hexagram Qian (15), symbol of humility and tact, and comprising the trigrams for earth and mountain (resting in its midst). The mountain symbolizes stopping, and manifests as great internal concentration, never forced outside but contained within quietly. Accordingly, the superior person diminishes what is excessive in himself and augments what is deficient, so that he is balanced in his treatment of others and himself, responding appropriately to each situation. As the explanation for the entire figure states, "It is the way of heaven to send its light and beneficial influences below, where they will be brilliantly displayed."

It is the way of earth to send its energy and influences upwards from below to act. It is the way of heaven to diminish the full and augment the humble. It is the way of earth to overthrow the full and replenish the humble. Spiritual beings inflict calamity on the full and bless the humble. It is the way of a true person to hate the full and love the humble. Humility lies in a position of honor, so it benefits a person not to seek to go beyond a low position, but to remain in it, being content to be in and of himself and to determine his own time for activity and rest. By taking charge of his rest, he fills himself with enough *qi* capacity required by his body.

The second divided line shows a humility that has revealed itself. "With firm correctness there will be good fortune indeed." So the right hand lies ahead while the left hand remains behind; the left foot is placed slightly forward while the right foot rests a little more than 2 *chi*[21] behind. However,

[21] about 70 cm.

what is most important is that there is respect and virtue in your heart's core, which commands all your body's movements. Although the body divides into external parts, the mind/heart is still the Host in closing, that is, in accumulating the force.

The third undivided line shows a superior person of acknowledged merit who still remains humble, while the fourth divided line shows one whose action is advantageous in everyway, his humility revealed and activated yet acting naturally with appropriate grace. As the saying goes, "A person should indeed be well versed in both polite letters[22] and the martial arts." The fifth divided line shows that the subject of the line may use the force of arms advantageously, while the topmost divided line shows the humility that has revealed itself. In this case, the subject of the line can successfully put his Hosts in motion to uphold peace and order in the world. This is the internal meaning of the martial arts. If you can nurture humility in your heart, you can survive and adopt yourself to any place and situation. This is what the *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture is all about. Better still, you will show true humility if you can go forth without resorting to this posture at all.

3. *Six-character a line verse dedicated to the 2nd performance of Lou-xi Ao-bu*

We have *Lou-xi Ao-bu* among the preceding forms,
We have this posture performing now.
It's not so good for individual cases,
Besides, you can't take a step.
In the White Crane form the right hand is leading,
In this posture the right hand is in front,
But the left one behind. Take a transverse step
And open the crotch one *chi*[23] to provide a round ward-off.
In this posture the body relies entirely on the agility of emptiness;

[22] That is, polite learning.
[23] 30 cm.

The sensitive organs have nothing to do with this.
Always being more than simply modest
What sort of care or fear can threaten a person of honor?
Let the wrongdoers' artfulness grow thickly;
Everything contains its strong and weak points.
The Qian (15) figure consists of earth
And a mountain in the midst of it.
So mountain is for arms and depicted by the hands
To express the general idea of stopping and rest,
While *Zhen* (thunder), the symbol of activity,
Is embodied in the feet through the docility of *Kun* (earth),
Which is in constant interaction with the healthy *Qian* (heaven).
That's why it is said that "strong and weak are fully alternating."
In so far as *Zhen* or movement is allocated to the feet,
We are now discussing about feet movement.

Posture 19

FAN THOUGH THE BACK OR FLASH ARMS LIKE A FAN

Shan Tong Bei

The diagrams below describe the first half of the posture.

1. Movement of the right hand

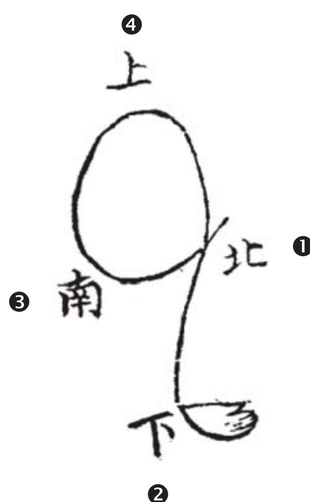


Fig. 2.19.1 Movement of the right hand

Inscriptions:

❶ north;
❷ below;
❸ south;
❹ above.

2. *Movement of the left hand*



Fig. 2.19.2 Movement of the left hand

Inscriptions:

❶ initial rise;
❷ west;
❸ below;
❹ left hand points east;
❺ moving path.

3. *Positions of the body*



Fig. 2.19.3 Positions of the body

Inscriptions:

❶ this position faces directly west; the right foot stamps here;

❷ this is the northwest pointing toe position for Bai E Liang Chi;

❸ the crotch is sunk down and drawn in.

4. *Diagram of the first half of Shan Tong Bei*



Fig. 2.19.4 The first half of Shan Tong Bei

Inscriptions:

❶ the left hand follows the right hand in a circle; the left foot takes a step back toward the east, while the left hand moves down then up until it stops behind the back; the movements of all parts of the body for this half of the posture is depicted here;

❷ after taking a step, the right foot points west while the right hand points south and moves in a circle north until it stops between the thighs in front of the crotch; focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head, letting *Zhong-qi* flow down the spine until the 21st vertebra;

❸ look at the right hand;

❹ bend the torso down at the waist;

❺ bend the right knee;

❻ turn the right foot in and point the toes west without flattening it completely on the ground; the distance between the feet is 6-7 *cun*[24]; then flatten the foot completely on the ground;

❼ point the left foot east and flatten it on the ground 2 *chi*[25] away from the right;

❽ draw the right foot westward, looking ahead while doing this as shown in the figure; then move the left foot from west to east, setting it pointing east on the ground.

[24] about 15-18 cm.
[25] about 70 cm.

5. The middle part of Shan Tong Bei

The front right foot points east, while the left foot passes beside the right foot and takes a 70 cm step backward before it flattens on the ground facing west. While this should be done in a single move, any short breaks you make in your steps should not be considered an error. The whole idea is to enable the internal essence of the preceding arm movements to flow uninterrupted in a single movement. When the torso bends down at the waist, *Zhong-qi* flows in reverse rotation from the 21st vertebra up the spine to the top of the head, then down again to the Dan-tian below the navel.

In the *Shan Tong Bei* posture, *Zhong-qi* emerges from the Dan-tian to rise in reverse direction through the chest area to the top of the head and nape, then down the spine to the 21st vertebra to meet the counter-flow. Both flows then move jointly upward in reverse direction to the top of the head, then return to the Dan-tian in the lower abdomen.

Thus the reverse flow of the Du-mai channel meets the Ren-mai channel in its down-flow in order to turn the latter round. Therefore Ren-mai moves in reverse direction to meet Du-mai's reverse flow from the top of the head down to the 21st vertebra. Then it rises again in reverse direction to the top of the head and from there down to the Dan-tian below the navel, as in the preceding part of the posture. Thus the reverse flow of Du-mai and the direct rotation of Ren-mai form a full circle.

The reverse flow of Ren-mai in this posture meets the direct rotation of Du-mai at the top of the head to follow it down the spine to the 21st vertebra. Then Du-mai turns around and runs again in the reverse cycle from the top of the head downward to meet the direct rotation of Ren-mai, finally returning to the Dan-tian. Thus, the first full circle is made first with Ren-mai then Du-mai, while the second circle is made first with Du-mai then Ren-mai.

a) Diagram of the middle part of Shan Tong Bei



Fig. 2.19.5 The middle part of Shan Tong Bei

Inscriptions:

❶ don't lose your focus on the essence at the top of the head;
❷ look at the right hand;
❸ right hand;
❹ the right foot lies at the east;
❺ the left foot lies at the west;
❻ left hand.

b) Movement of the feet



Fig. 2.19.6 Movement of the feet

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left foot lies at the east;
- ❷ the left foot moves from east to west;
- ❸ the left foot is placed at the west;
- ❹ the right heel is positioned firm and immovable on the ground.

So the cycle of both channels makes a total of two circles. This is what the middle part of the *Shan Tong Bei* posture is all about.

The dividing line between the last part of *Shan Tong Bei* and the following *Yan Shou Chui* or Screen Hand and Punch posture is depicted in the diagrams which follow.

The internal essence of the frontal Ren-mai channel flows down to the crotch, then to Du-mai at the back to meet with *Zhong-qi*, which flows slowly in reverse rotation up to acupoint Bai-hui at the top of the head. The reverse movement of internal essence reaches its limits as depicted in the Fig. 2.19.7 which shows the last part of all three movements which comprise the *Shan Tong Bei* posture.

c) Final movement of Shan Tong Bei

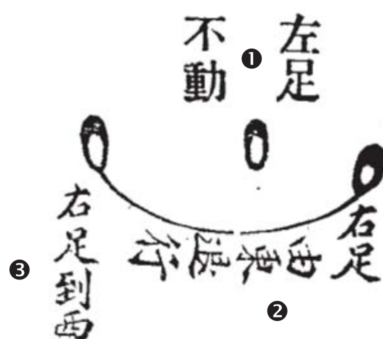


Fig. 2.19.7 Final movement of Shan Tong Bei

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left foot is in an immovable position;
- ❷ the right foot retreats backwards from the east;
- ❸ the left foot lies at the west.

6. Diagram of the opened crotch



Fig. 2.19.8 Diagram of the opened crotch

Inscriptions:

❶ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head to guide the whole process properly;

❷ the right arm is extended backward to delineate the boundary of Shan Tong Bei;

❸ turn the left foot west;

❹ look at the left hand while the palm strikes rightward.

Fig. 2.19.7 depicts the right hand placed behind the body after the *Yan Shou Chui* posture to set up the next stance, so that the strike may be ready to be performed any time. The left hand is placed behind the body, while the right in front. Take a step forward and strike. This is what the posture is all about. Contain the chest area and move without pause to complete *Yan Shou Chui* in one movement. After this, pause for the shortest moment to mark the beginning of the next posture. Keep the left foot immovable, though the position of the heel may be re-adjusted when the toes turn west. Turn the torso east and flatten the left foot east, then take a step right and place the right foot behind the left.

The *Shan Tong Bei* posture requires a reverse movement in a circle. First, the left foot takes a step west then flattens firmly on the ground, re-adjust its position slightly by turning the heel. At the same time, the right foot moves in reverse direction from west to east, then back again from east to west in a full circle.

Following the right foot's movement, the right hand moves down in direct rotation to bring *jing* essence into the arm, then it moves up again and back in the same direction as the right foot so as to induce *jing* essence flow in reverse rotation.

Bend both elbows. Bend the torso at the waist and move the left arm behind the body, pointing it east. The internal essence coils in reverse movement from hand to armpit. When the left foot is placed west, the left arm's

essence coils outward to flow directly from the armpit to the hand while the left foot moves in reverse direction eastward. When the left hand is at the east, it starts to move in direct rotation as an empty arm in order to initiate the right strike eastward, thus returning to the initial position of *Shan Tong Bei*.

The right foot and right hand are positioned at the west. The right hand moves down, while the torso turns in a reverse semi-circle. When the right foot is at the east, the right hand coils *jing* essence toward the east, while the right foot makes a reverse turn toward the west. Following the body's turn west, the right arm stretches out and moves up in an attacking strike as the waist straightens simultaneously. The left hand is placed to the front at the level of the left shoulder to perform the *Shan Tong Bei* gesture, that is, flashing the arms like a fan, at the same time as both arms straighten out in the 'Fan Though the Back' gesture. It is not very easy to determine how far both arms should stretch out.

The *Shan Tong Bei* posture means that *Zhong-qi* flows down from the heart through the navel to the Dan-tian, then back up in reverse direction to the navel then to acupoint Shang-wan above it, up along the Ren-mai channel to acupoint Hua-gai in the upper chest area, then continuing to acupoints Tian-tu and Lian-quan at the throat, to finally come to a rest at acupoint Cheng-jiang on the cheek just under the lower lip.

The Du-mai channel flows in reverse direction to meet with Ren-mai at acupoint Shui-gou, the midpoint between the nose and the upper lip. It then flows through Ren-zhong and Su-liao at the end of the nose, up to Shen-ting above the hairline, then finally through Shang-xing, Xin-hui, Qian-ding and Bai-hui at the top of the head. It then flows down to Hou-ding located backward from the top, then through Qiang-men, Qiang-jian, Nao-hu, Feng-fu, Ya-men, continuing down the upper vertebrae, including Da-chui on the top vertebra, through Tao-dao, Shen-zhu, Shen-dao, Ling-tai, Zhi-yang, Jin xu, Ji-zhong, Xuan-shu, Ming-men, Yang-Guan, Yao-shu and Zhang-qiang, down to the tailbone and Hui-yin, which is the starting point of Ren-mai in front and Du-mai at the back.

Zhong-qi starts flowing from Bai-hui at the top of the head, down to acupoint Zhang-qiang at the tailbone and Hui-yin to reflect a person who links the small of the back with the front torso through *Shan Tong Bei*. Bend suddenly down and forward, dropping your head and shoulders. Then tuck your tailbone[26] and acupoint Huan-tiao[27] backward. Next, use strength to lift the lower abdomen and turn quickly around to face the opponent. Simultaneously, extend both hands outward and pass them over the level of your head, moving them forward in a flash-arm gesture, that is, flashing them in front of the opponent's face like a slap so as to knock him out. This is what *Shan Tong Bei* is all about.

[26] acupoint Zhang-qiang.
[27] Located in the hollow of the buttock.

7. Diagram of the right hand's movement

The body turns around in a reverse circle while the right hand moves up using the flash-arm gesture. The right hand plays the principle role here, moving in parallel with the right foot after the body turns.

Fig. 2.19.9 Diagram of the right hand's movement

Inscriptions:

❶ east;

❷ south;

❸ west;

❹ north;

❺ the right hand is placed here at the start, facing west;

❻ it moves down;

❼ still facing west, it then moves up and turns north;

❽ the right hand moves east to turn in reverse circle, then faces south;

❾ the right hand reaches west.

8. Diagram of the left hand's movement

The left hand moves in a reverse circle after the body turns.

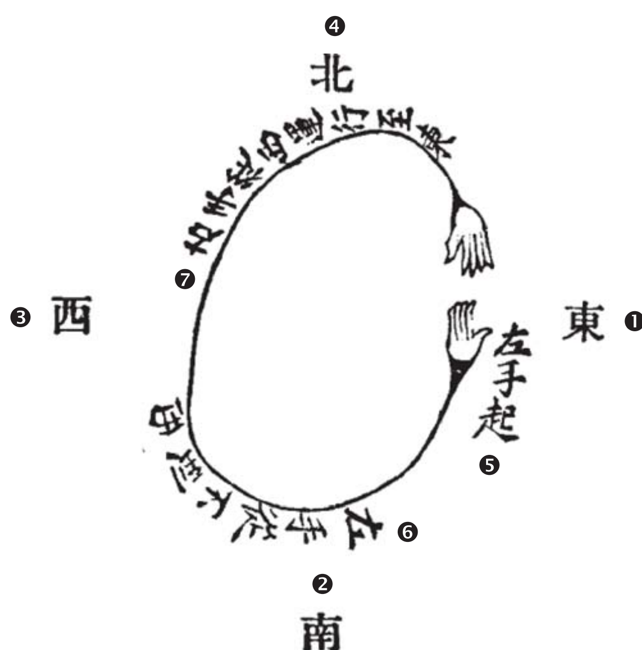


Fig. 2.19.10 Diagram of the left hand's movement

Inscriptions:

❶ east;

❷ south;

❸ west;

❹ north;

❺ the start of the left hand's movement;

❻ the left hand moves down and west;

❼ the right hand moves from west to east.

9. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The *Shan Tong Bei* posture implies that the head is bent down westward. As a result of the reverse turn, you start to face north then east, continuing to turn in a circle until you face south. Such a big turn circular is associated with *yin* substance and correlates with hexagram Da-guo (28), symbol of supernatural power and super-normal phenomena. Da-guo is comprised of the *Xun* trigram which represents trees hidden beneath the waters of *Dui*.

The image of the youngest and oldest daughters represent *yin*, hence the posture's association with Da-guo (28). The bottom and topmost divided lines denote *yin* and represent the four limbs of the body. These two lines are weak and submit to carrying out orders. The undivided second, third, fourth and the fifth lines are strong and represent the way of heaven (*Qi*an), which is like a strong and healthy heart, full of virtues and able to give proper orders to the four extremities.

In addition, heaven interacts with earth (*Kun*) to keep the strong and weak and the solid and soft in balance. Though the body is required to turn in a wide circle, it does so correctly and promptly with the help of the four limbs. Hence the fourth undivided line shows "A beam curving up. The peril has passed by and there will be good fortune." This means that *Haoran zhi qi* overflows from the heart to create the imposing image of a superior person and true ruler, self-sufficient and benevolent. The explanation for the entire hexagram states, "Da-guo shows the great power of undivided lines in excess," thus implying that the big circular turn reveals the body's power is in excess.

In "the beam that is weak on its tips[28]", we see weakness both in the lowest and the topmost lines, both representing the upper and lower limbs. The strong lines are in excess, but two of them (the second and fifth) are in central positions. This signifies that *Zheng-qi* of the mind/heart is able

[28] This means a beam curving downward, as opposed to the aforementioned 'a beam curving up'.

to maintain the course of the Golden Mean despite the wide circular body turn.

The action of hexagram Da-guo (28) is represented by the symbols for flexibility (from the lower wind trigram *Xun*) and satisfaction (from the upper marsh trigram *Dui*), in as much as the four limbs perform the orders of the mind/heart without delay. Hence it is said, "There will be advantage in moving in any direction, so there will be success." One must be very talented and obtain tremendous powers to achieve success. This means that without the turns and rapid movements of the form, one has no chance of winning in the martial arts. Great indeed is the work to be done at this very extraordinary time, as the Da-guo hexagram shows!

The doctrine of the Book of Changes asserts that vivid and expansive movements can embrace everything under heaven. There is no thing or case that lies beyond this. Therefore the current *Shan Tong Bei* posture correlates with hexagram Da-guo (28) precisely due to the latter's all-embracing and powerful meaning. Thus through the images and symbols of the Book of Changes, we discover and realize the inner structures, meanings and usefulness of *Taiji* boxing postures.

10. Five-character a line verse dedicated to Shan Tong Bei

The bronze stele sticks in the back;
The whole body employs *qi* energy.
Hipbones turn round with haste;
The head takes advantage of bowing down.
Despite a thousand pounds of weight,
You will be able to overthrow it.

11. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the 1st performance of Shan Tong Bei

VERSE 1

Ancestors left us the *Shan Tong Bei* technique,
Which implies a sudden chopping strike
With the edge of the right palm,
Made with a mighty about-turn.
The right foot turns pointing at the point
Between Geng (7) and Xin (8), that is, the south;
The whole body takes the posture
Capable of conquering the mighty Qin Dynasty.

VERSE 2

What kind of role do shoulders and arms play
In the posture called *Shan Tong Bei*?
The DU-MAI channel runs to ZHANG-QIANG at the tailbone
Following the true course of the Golden Mean.
Turn around from the lower position to occupy the higher one,
Raining down *jing* essence onto the opponent's head in an explosion
Which suddenly springs forward from your bow.

VERSE 3

At first *Yan Shou Chui* faces west,
But somehow this location turns to the east.
Though being powerful, try to persuade your ruler
To have a good rest to guard against the crafty foe
Who, as a rule, attacks from behind.

Verse 4

From ancient times worldly affairs were all different;
To practice martial arts, how could movements be alike?
To improve each one means to improve the whole posture;
To stop in order to teach a stranger — laughter is illogical.
Coming closer, bend the arm at the elbow and exert yourself;
Moving apart from him, how can you not stretch the arms?
Your situation, as well as the condition of the opponent,
Is not quite definite, as all changes of the situation
Are determined in the depths of the heart.
From the momentum of the big turn round
Shan Tong Bei resembles a lofty wave,
Which breaks the subject at three points
To enter into the spirit in extraordinary ways.
The legendary ruler Yu created the method
To restrain the flood by employing the three-layered wave attack.
When a young fisherman came to make inquiries,
The reply was, "If the enemy comes from the east,
And you are going to attack eastward,
Not a single soul will you find there. Do nothing but attack
According to the doctrine of *Qian* and *Kun*,
And all around you will see in this a great many excellent skills,
As *Haoran zhi qi*
Is able indeed to shake the heavens!

Posture 20

SCREEN HAND AND PUNCH

You Shou Chui

1. Diagram of the posture

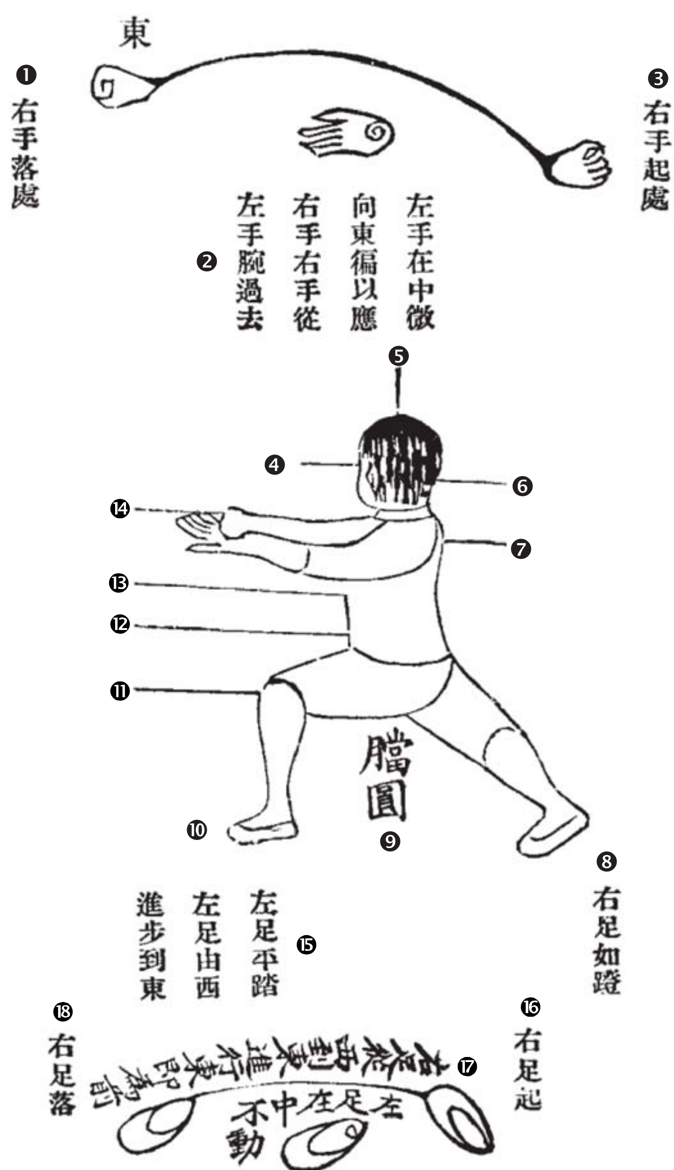


Fig. 2.20.1 Screen Hand and Punch (You Shou Chui)

Inscriptions to the top figure:

❶ the place where the right hand starts its move east;

❷ the left hand lies midway, pointing obliquely east and moving over the right arm in a screen gesture;

❸ the final position of the right hand.

Inscriptions to the middle figure:

❹ this is the back view of the *Yan Shou Chui* posture; look at the right hand;

❺ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head, which acts as the command post;

❻ the left ear listens to what happens behind the body;

❼ drop the left elbow down;

❽ the right foot steps foward;

❾ round-in the crotch;

❿ after taking a step forward from west to east, flatten the left foot on the ground;

⓫ keep the left knee up;

⓬ *jing* essence of the waist sinks down;

⓭ the torso faces east, as if it is grasped from both sides by the arms;

⓮ move the right hand from west to east in a punch.

Inscriptions to the bottom figure:

⓯ the right foot steps forward from west to east, then flattens on the ground;

⓰ lift the right foot;

⓱ stamp the left foot in the middle, setting it immobile;

⓲ lower the right foot.

2. General description

In the preceding *Shan Tong Bei* posture, the immovable left foot is placed east, while the right foot takes a step forward from west to east, passing beside the left foot. The right hand is placed west, then moves up and closes in to punch eastward. The left arm is outstretched and screens the right hand as it attacks eastward. The left elbow points obliquely west to press internal essence issuing from the Dan-tian downward, facilitating its flow to the crotch and the tailbone. This essence then flows back upward in reverse direction to Bai-hui at the top of the head, through the right shoulder, along the forearm to the right fist. The punch is made after taking a left bow step forward. Exert all the body's energy and spirit into the right punch. At the same time, stamp both feet strongly on the ground as if trying to shake an immovable mountain — there is no way to do this even with colossal strength!

3. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The *Yan Shou Chui* posture is used to concentrate one's energy and spirit into the right punch, so it is associated with hexagram Cui (45), symbol of gathering into one point and of union. The lowest divided line shows that its subject possesses "a sincere desire for union with the subject of the fourth line, but unable to carry it out because of the obstacles (depicted by the second and third lines) in her way." As such, disorder is brought into the sphere of her union. Therefore she clenches her right hand into a fist to crush the obstacle out of the way. Cui (45) denotes a state where "in whatever direction movement is made, it will be advantageous." Hence *Yan Shou Chui* is allocated to hexagram Cui (45) or union.

Meanwhile, the right foot takes a step forward under the modest auspices of the figure Xiao-guo (62), symbol of excess in small things. Hence we have here the condition of Xiao-guo (62), comprising the image of mountain below and thunder above, and manifested in the right forward punch. This signifies that the punching style is so swift, like the high-speed flut-

ter of bird wings vibrating so fast that only empty sounds of flight issue from it, that no-one can withstand it. These qualities are captured in the in the Xiao-guo hexagram. At the same time, however, the punch cannot be called insubstantial or tenuous, and so is associated with hexagram Da Zhuang (34), symbol of great vigor and flourish. Da Zhuang (34) signifies that which is becoming great and strong, being comprised of heaven in its lower trigram which suggests directed strength, and thunder in its upper trigram which expresses vigor.

Hence *You Shou Chui*, which still bears the power generated by the preceding *Shan Tong Bei* posture, personifies pure strength, wherein *qi* flows within the solidness of the right arm, straight through the right fist to be released in a mighty punch, in the way of firm but rigid correctness. Hence the second undivided line shows that with firm correctness there will be good fortune. This is due to its strong position in the center, and its subject exemplifying the Golden Mean.

Da Zhuang (34) signals the benefits of being firm and correct, since it suggests that what is great should also be correct. Once correctness and greatness are realized to their highest potential, the characteristics and tendencies of heaven and earth will be revealed. The right punch is like a clap of thunder above heaven, a strike so swift that it leaves no trace. The lowest undivided line shows its subject "personifying his strength in his toes. But advance will most certainly lead to evil." The right foot flattens at the east and becomes immovable by having its right toes dug firmly into the ground, so much so that any attempt to move them leads to certain exhaustion.

4. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the 2nd performance of Yan Shou Chui

Verse 1

All of a sudden the opponent comes from the east —
As a result, the right fist counter-attacks to the east;
Take a right bow step forward, stopping at the release of force,
To uproot the aggressor and make him fall flat on his back.

Verse 2

Raise the right foot and take a step east as an impulse;
The force of the fist is like the wind or even more so like thunder.
If you ask me why the step forward is so steady,
The reason is that you need to release the 'embryo'
Before the next form starts.

Posture 21

HOLDING ONE LAP PULL ON ROBE

Lan Zha Yi

1. Five-character a line verse dedicated to the posture

East corresponds to numbers Jia (1) and Yi (1) of Wood;
The right arm extends almost at full length,
As if it is straightened yet not totally straightened.
Thus the coming opponent dares not enter your space.
The right arm is stretched to the east,
While the left arm guards against attack from the west;
Zhong-qi flows from the bottom of the heart,
A burst of which cannot be compared to poison.
No matter what the conditions are, it penetrates like a blast,
Who would like to test the force of its blast?
All human bodies are almost the same,
But the way to employ it depends on individual cases.
The matter is not about possessing strength,
But about the way of obtaining *Zhong-qi* fully.
Brightness of mind is at the bottom of the heart —
There are many good places and all of them are different.
If you are able to follow the course of the Golden Mean,
You will be like a white crane among chickens.
For all practitioners of the martial arts
I'd like to say that the clue to the Path is in this purpose.

The upper, lower, left and right sides of the body — everything looks similar to the first performance of *Lan Zha Yi*. Therefore there is no need to repeat explanations. Just follow the preceding form, draw the right hand and stretch it out again whilst also withdrawing the right foot and drawing it to the ground beside the left foot. After this, draw the right foot out in a semi-circle from west to east to extend it into a right bow step.

2. Diagram of the posture facing north



Fig. 2.21.1 Holding One Lap Pull on Robe (Lan Zha Yi)

Inscriptions:

❶ west;

❷ left hand;

❸ re-adjust the left heel so that left toes point north; the foot becomes immovable;

❹ after re-adjustment; draw the right foot from east to west in a circle, then place it east again;

❺ right hand;

❻ east.

3. The right hand's movement

Draw the right hand from the east closer to the torso, passing it in front of the ribs, then continuing east again in an outward circle.

4. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The *Lan Zha Yi* posture correlates to two hexagrams: Xiao-xu (9), symbol of minor restraint and small obstructions, and Da-xu (26), symbol of great accumulation and major restraint.

Hexagram Xiao-xu (9) denotes "dense clouds, but no rain coming from our borders in the west." This means that the right hand's moves east from the west. The explanation for the entire Xiao-xu (9) hexagram states that, "in Xiao-xu the weak line occupies its proper position, and the lines above and below respond to it." This means that the right hand correlates with *yin* and corresponds to the sole weak and divided line in the fourth (even) position.

Thus, strong *yang* is found in strong positions located in the centers of both trigrams, that is, the second and fifth ones. The movement of the right hand should be in the *yin* nature of the subject of the fourth line. As the explanation to the entire Xiao-xu (9) hexagram goes: "Its powers are not enough to rule all the strong lines, hence the name Xiao-xu[29] (9). Its inner trigram for heaven represents strength and the outer trigram for wind represents flexibility. Strong lines are in the central places of both trigrams, indicating the will of their subjects will have free course. This means that with the aid of *yang* substance, the right hand is able to stretch out within the solid movement.

The great symbolism of the Xiao-xu (9) hexagram is formed by the trigrams representing heaven and wind moving above it. This means that the right hand moves like a gust of wind over the firmament of heaven. The lowest undivided line shows its subject returning and pursuing his own path. This denotes that the right hand moves in a circle up and eastward to return to its own path. The topmost undivided line denotes falling rain and how it hinders onward progress. Hence we must value the full accumulation of the inner virtue of *yin* represented by the upper trigram *Xun* (wind). The right hand is associated with *yin*, the upper trigram *Xun*, and

[29] Xiao-xu literally means 'small restraint'.

the fast flow of *Zhong-qi*, which can be compared to a gust of wind, the only power able to disperse *yin* substance. Thus, the subject of the topmost line turns into water. Rain falls onto the subject of the third strong and undivided line to wash and cultivate the virtue of a noble person. Onward progress is hampered — the *yin* power denoted in the hexagram has almost fully culminated, like a moon approaching fullness. This means that *Zhong-qi* of the right hand is full, like the bright moon in the middle of the month. The second undivided line shows its subject returning to the proper course due to its attraction to the former line; while the fifth undivided line shows its subject possessing sincerity which draws others to unite with him. Although the right hand correlates with *yin* power, *yang qi* comes to the right arm to be released at that time.

The Da-xu (62) hexagram is formed by the trigram representing mountain, with the trigram for heaven in its midst. Mountain corresponds to the arms — the right hand moves forward until it stops to be filled up with solid *qi*. Thus heavenly *Qi*an interacts with earthly *Kun,* signifying that solid and soft, strong and weak are balanced with each other. Mountain turns into thunder (according to the arrangement of King Wen), which corresponds to the east. The right hand extends from west to east. Trigram *Zhen* or thunder is associated with the feet — both feet are equally weighted, flattened on the ground in a stable stance.

Hence the explanation for the entire hexagram states: "In the trigrams which form Da-xu, we see the attributes of the supreme strength (heaven) and of substantial solidity (mountain)." This indicates that *Zhong-qi* is full in this posture. The explanation also states that, "The strong fifth line of the figure Xu (5) moves up to occupy the highest place (the topmost line) of Da-xu, suggesting the value set on talents and virtue." This means that the right hand's skill is regarded as more significant than the left. In addition, it states that, "There is the due power of the fifth divided line in the center of the upper trigram for mountain to keep the strongest (heaven) in restraint. This shows "the great correctness" required in the hexagram.' This implies that the right hand itself is able to stop the opponent's at-

tack, as its power lies in the course of the Golden Mean. The statement, "It will be advantageous to cross the great stream," confirms that as the great stream means benefits, so too does the right hand. The topmost undivided line shows its subject "hovering over the firmament of heaven. There will be progress," suggesting the way is open in majestic welcome for any steps toward great achievement. This confirms that accumulating resources and forces will facilitate following the path over a long period. *Zhong-qi* flows into the right arm, as if removing obstacles in the magnificently open Way called the *Dao*.

Posture 22

SINGLE WHIP (2ND PERFORMANCE)

Dan Bian

1. Four-character a line verse dedicated to the posture

Where is the nimbus or bright soul born?
It is born in one's mind/heart.
Where does *Zhong-qi* return?
It returns to both kidneys.
Once the mind/heart moves, volition follows it
To launch the work of the four extremities.
Qi flows within bones
To fill up the muscles and skin.
As a result of long practice,
You gain agility.
This sort of agility is incomparable,
Rely on it and you will understand.
React appropriately indeed:
Don't go too near; don't go too far;
Soak, connect, adhere and chase,
To make the foe feel like a fly in glue:
There are wings but no way to fly away —
This is what is called the Most Beautiful Wonder —
The mystery within all mysteries.

2. Diagram of the posture facing north

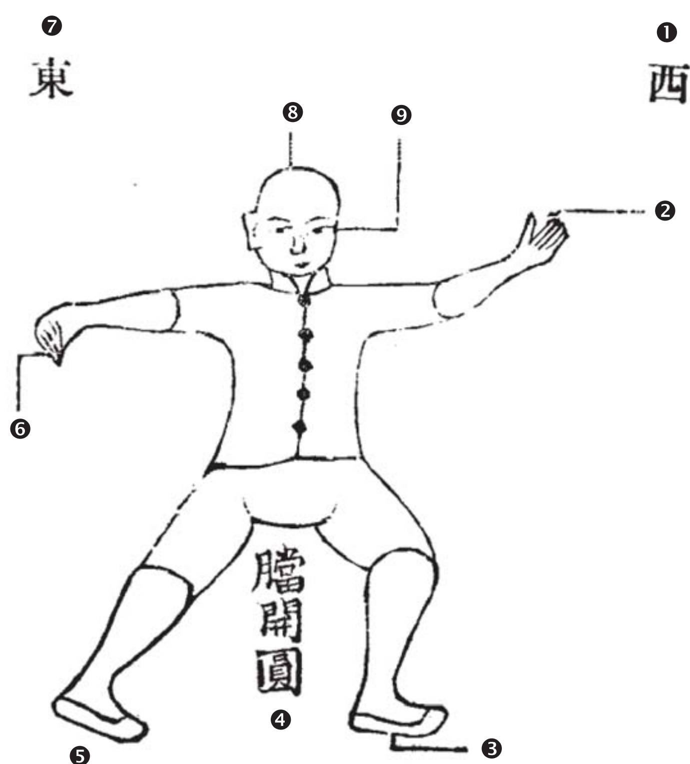


Fig. 2.22.1 2nd performance of Single Whip (Dan Bian)

Inscriptions:

❶ west;

❷ starting at the level of the navel, both hands extend out from east to west; simultaneously, *jing* essence coils along the left arm in direct movement to produce the silk-reeling energy effect;

❸ first draw the left foot to the ground beside the right foot; then take a left step westward, the toes of both feet pointing west;

❹ open the crotch and make it rounded;

❺ re-adjust the position of your right foot behind the left, turning the right heel northwest;

6. stop the right hand in an immovable position at the east, then draw a reverse circle from behind the body;
7. east;
8. focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;
9. look at the middle finger-tip.

3. The 2nd performance of Single Whip (Dan Bian)

The right hand moves in a small circle from the posterior lower position toward the north, while the left hand moves in a circle outward and north, then turns south. Next, both hands stop in front of the face: the right hand continues to stretch out directly west, while the left hand stretches out in the reverse easterly direction.

At the same time, the right hand makes the hook hand gesture by bunching all five fingers and pointing them downward. Both arms are slightly bent at the elbows in the shape of a new moon. Focus *jing* essence at the top of the head and round-in the crotch to allow waist *jing* essence to descend. In the final movement, *qi* returns to the Dan-tian while both arms are closed together, and the shoulders, knees and feet move synchronously. Look at the middle finger-tip of the left hand and at the same time, control the situation at the front and behind, left and right, above and below the body, paying close attention to every detail of the posture.

4. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The first performance of Single Whip was made within the framework of the four hexagrams, Kan (29), Li (30), Pi (12) and Tai (11). The current second performance utilizes the same images and symbols to manifest its internal meaning through the hexagrams.

5. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

The first performance of *Dan Bian* faces north,
And the second one also faces north.
The previous Single Whip was followed by *Jin* gang *Dao Dui*,
While the current posture is followed by *Yun Shou*[30],
Each posture springs out from different sources;
In the final movement the extremities are oriented east.
Every piece of nimbus comes from the mind/heart
To ascend to the blue sky and descend to the earth.
This sort of nimbus energy flows within extremities:
Neither solid nor soft, always natural and graceful
To flow out from the subsequent *Yun Shou*'s release.
Yun Shou's release is a dragon,
Which fastens up all eight parts of body:
The head, crotch, heart, eyes, ears, arms, legs and waist.
This is what a noble person should always keep in mind —
The power of humans is an integral part of the entire work of Nature.

[30] The 'Wave Hands Like Clouds' posture.

Posture 23

WAVE HANDS LIKE CLOUDS OF BOTH SIDES (LEFT AND RIGHT)

Zuo You Yun Shou

Accumulate *jing* essence at the top of the head. Look at the middle fingertip of the right hand.

The Single Whip posture implies that the left hand is placed west to lead the right hand; the right hand moves east, while the left hand moves down until it stops about 15 cm in front of the left nipple; when the left hand starts to move in a curve, shoulders should be relaxed and sunk down

When the left hand draws back, the left foot is placed west; the left hand follows the path of the left foot and moves in a circle, passing in front of the left nipple; the left toes point north draw the right foot beside the left, then step it transversely east; meanwhile, move the right hand in a circle and flatten the right foot on the ground, toes pointing north.

Draw the right hand from the east in a semi-circle until it stops in front of the right side of the chest, then move it past in front of the right nipple before turning it back in a circle east.

1. Movement of the right hand



Fig. 2.23.1 Movement of the right hand

Inscriptions:

❶ shoulders should be relaxed and sunk down;

❷ right hand;

❸ look at the middle finger of the right hand;

❹ focus on the *jing* essence at the top of the head.

3. Movement of the left hand

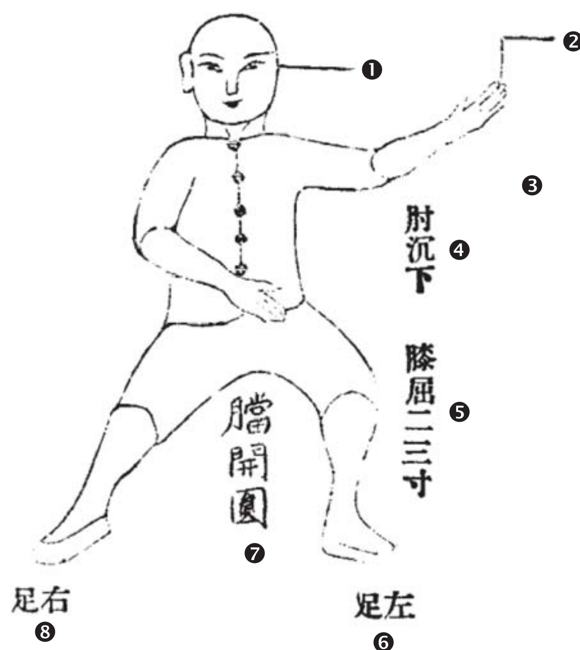


Fig. 2.23.2 Movement of the left hand

Inscriptions:

❶ look at the left hand;

❷ the leading left hand moves west, the left foot following the right hand's movement; thus, the left hand makes a circle in front of the left torso descending from the top, then west again in a direct circular rotation; at the same time, the right hand starts to move in a circle in front of the right side of the torso;

❸ when the left foot extends west, the right hand also draws a semi-circle west, passing in front of the right side of the torso;

❹ sink the elbow;

❺ bend the knee about 7 cm;

❻ left foot;

❼ round-in the crotch;

❽ the right foot;

9. the left foot is placed west, while the right foot draws beside it, toes touching the ground; as soon as the right foot lies flat on the ground, step the left foot west in an arc;
10. the left hand moves in a semi-circle west, while the right hand makes a semi-circle inwards from the east, passing in front of the right side of the torso, 15-20 cm from the right nipple;
11. relax the right shoulder and hang it loosely.

Taking a right step, simultaneously move the right hand in a circle from the east. Passing in front of the right side of the torso, the right hand threads its way back east, while the left hand, moving from the west in a semi-circle, passes in front of the left side of the torso to return to the west. While this is happening, take a step west with the left foot and draw the right foot from the east, setting it on the ground about 15-18 cm from the left foot. The right foot moves in a semi-circle, parallel with the right hand.

When the right hand is placed east, the left hand is in front of the left nipple; when the left hand moves west, the right hand moves in sequence to the front of the right nipple. When the left foot takes a step west, the right foot draws up in a westerly curve to land beside the left foot. When the right foot takes the next step east, the left foot draws up beside the right foot. Each foot makes three circles each, meaning that you take step three times to the west with the left foot, the right foot drawing beside the left after each step. The third step marks the transition to the following *Gao Tan Ma* posture, which is very similar to the third performance of *Jin gang Dao Dui* but with an additional transverse step as a transition to the next posture.

Both feet alternate steps without a break: once the left foot is set on the ground, draw the right foot 15-18 cm beside the left, and then set it on the ground in a toe-to-heel position. During the transverse non-crossing footwork to the west, look straight north. Meanwhile, draw the first half of the circle in direct rotation with the right hand to let *Zhong-qi* flow out from the armpit in slanting reels toward the fingers. Then as you draw the

second half of the circle, *Zhong-qi* returns to the armpit in the same slanting reel, flowing inward from the east. The left hand moves in parallel with the left foot which steps west. When the right foot draws in a half step on the ground beside the left foot, *jing* essence flows down from the root of the right thigh in a reeling motion toward the right toes, then returns to the root of the thigh by reeling inward. This same silk-reeling method is used in the left leg.

4. *Diagram of the posture oriented north*

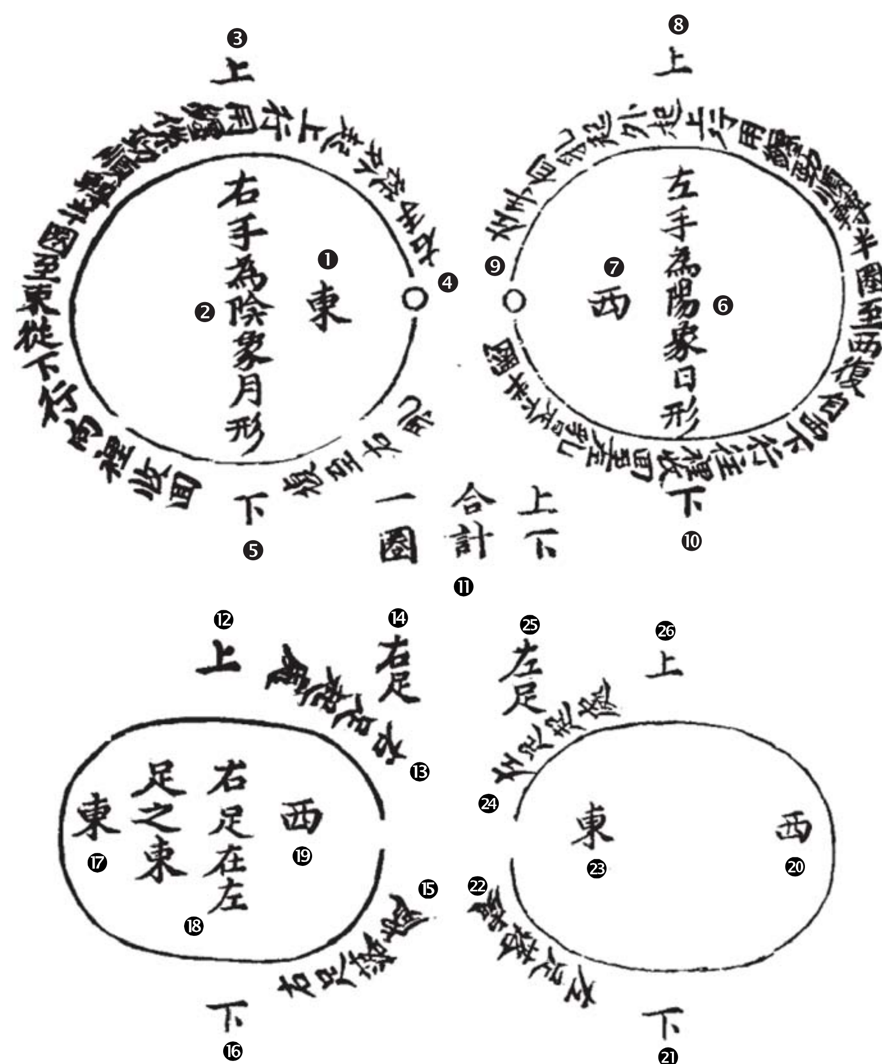


Fig. 2.23.3 Diagram of the posture oriented north

Inscriptions – top-left circle:

❶ east;

❷ the right hand correlates with yin and symbolizes the moon.

❸ above;

❹ the right hand rotates outward and reels upward to form the first half of a circle toward the east. Then it rotates inward to place itself in front of the right nipple;

❺ below;

❻ the left hand correlates with yang and symbolizes the sun;

❼ west.

Inscriptions – top-right circle:

❽ above;

❾ the left hand moves up from the front of the left nipple, then outward through the reeling of intrinsic force, rotating in a semi-circle west; from the west, it rotates in and moves down until it lies in front of the left nipple after completion of the second half of the circle;

❿ below.

Inscription beneath the top circles:

⓫ adding both semi-circles rotating up and down, we get a full circle.

Inscriptions – bottom-left circle:

⓬ up;

⓭ the place where the right foot is raised;

⓮ the right foot;

⓯ the place where the right foot is set on the ground;

⓰ down;

⓱ west;

⓲ the right foot is east from the left;

⓳ east.

Inscriptions – bottom-right circle:

⓴ west;

㉑ down;

㉒ the place where the left foot is raised;

㉓ east;

㉔ the place where the left foot is placed on the ground;

㉕ the left foot;

㉖ up.

5. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The left hand is associated with *yang* and symbolizes the sun, while the right hand corresponds to *yin* and symbolizes the moon. *Qian* is the symbol of heaven, and when the hands pass over the head level, it is like the alternation of the sun and moon in the sky of the Li (30) figure, symbol of brightness, sunrise and attachment. Li (30) signifies attachment, represented in this case by the attachment of a strong line to two environmentally weak lines, just as the sun and moon have their place in the environmental sky. All things have their pairs, and if perfectly matched, the pair flourishes and reigns over all under heaven. The Li (30) hexagram is formed by two repeated trigrams for brightness. Accordingly, the great person cultivates her brilliant virtues increasingly and diffuses their brightness over the four quarters of the world, just as the movements of both hands reflect the condition of the whole body.

The lowest undivided line shows its subject moving hastily with confused steps. But if she changes her mind and starts to tread conscientiously, no mistake will be made at all. In other words, paying attention to righting confused steps is the way to avoid great error. Thus, when taking alternate steps west and east, take heed and bring dedicated respect to every step. Hollow the chest in imitation of the structure of *Li* (fire), whose middle line is divided and weak. *Li* transforms into its opposite, *Kan* (water), so that waist *jing* essence flows down and *qi* returns to the Dan-tian in closing with *Kan* as a great accumulation of *qi*. Therefore this posture is allocated to hexagram *Li* (double fire), since both hands manifest as the Sun and Moon, as well as the thunder and wind of hexagram Heng (32) figure, symbol of constancy and long continuity.

Hexagram Heng (32) is comprised of trigram *Zhen* (thunder) with trigram *Xun* (wind) resting in its midst. Both hands move in rotation without pause to express the meaning of Heng. The explanation for this hexagram states, "Heng denotes long continuance." And, "The sun and moon, realizing the course of heaven in themselves, can perpetuate their shining. The way of heaven and earth is to continue over a long time in their opera-

tion without cease.' When it is said, "Movement in any direction, all will be advantageous," it implies that when the power for movement is spent, more will be regenerated. This, too, is why the *Yun Shou* posture is allocated to Heng (32). The second undivided line shows all situations requiring repentance disappearing. This is due to its subject's ability to stay in the Golden Mean for a prolonged period. The fifth divided line indicates virtuousness and shows its subject continuously maintaining this attribute.

6. Five-character a line verse dedicated to the Yun Shou posture

Both hands lead both legs
In a dance of left and right, east and west;
First the left hand leads,
While the right hand follows it west.
The right foot is also drawn west,
Both arms are closed-in with the shoulders;
Both hands move more than one chi,
Reeling in and out in slow rotation.
Zhong-qi flows through the spine
Without clinging to any one point.
When the right foot is drawn,
The left hand is placed at the west.

7. Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture

Both hands rotate east to return to the west;
Both feet take transverse steps in a special way.
Moving back and forth, *qi* flows without interruption;
Double fire hangs like the sun and moon in the sky
To shine on every single thing in heaven and on earth.

Posture 24

HIGH PAT ON HORSE

Gao Tan Ma

In this posture, you move both hands north, as shown by Fig 2.24.1 which faces north. After turning, you face south. This is the posture in the old style. The left hand leads the right, drawing a circle from the east. At the same time, it also leads the left foot, which takes a step back to settle on the ground facing east. Meanwhile, the torso faces south.

1. Diagram of the posture

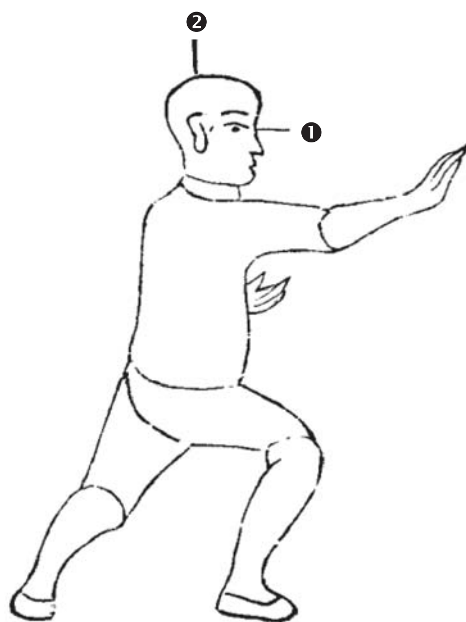


Fig. 2.24.1 High Pat on Horse (Gao Tan Ma)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ look at the middle finger-tip of the right hand;
- ❺ the energy (*jing* essence) focused at the top of the head guides *Zhong-qi* flow.

Following the right hand, the left foot moves east in a circular movement, while the right foot takes a step back with toes pointing southwest; then the left foot takes a wide step back to flatten eastward from the right foot.

Following the movement of the right hand, the right foot takes a step back to the east with toes pointing southwest.

The right hand first follows the left hand in a circle east and then turns west; at the same time, turn the torso west while the right hand extends forward with the back of the hand facing up.

The *Gao Tan Ma* posture derives its name from its stance which resembles the mounting of a horse. Its posture suggests that the body is raised and leaning slightly forward, like a person preparing to ride a horse, one hand holding the reins and one foot in the stirrup. Both hands point west against the opponent's grasp of your left forearm. In such circumstances, try to lure the opponent into further advance: your right hand leads the left hand sideways, while the right foot takes a step back eastward to provide good footing for the counter-attack. Then, turn the left hand back west in counter-attack, drawing a circle to release the left forearm from the opponent's grasp. When luring your opponent in, move the right hand east, while stepping the right foot backward to follow the right hand, setting it on the ground at the east. Re-adjust the right foot so that the toes point southwest. Take a wide step back with the left foot, past the right foot at the east, and set it on the ground. Now the left leg carries the weight, while the right leg is empty.

Meanwhile, move the left elbow back in attack by turning the torso south. After turning, drop the left hand below the left nipple level, 5-8 cm from the chest to protect the chest area, palm facing up. Turn the torso from west to south; the right arm stretches out to the west, palm facing down and forming a hold-ball gesture, as if putting a saddle on a horse. The right hand rotates in direct rotation to reel in *jing* essence, while the left hand coils the energy in reverse direction.

2. Diagram of internal essence flowing through both hands

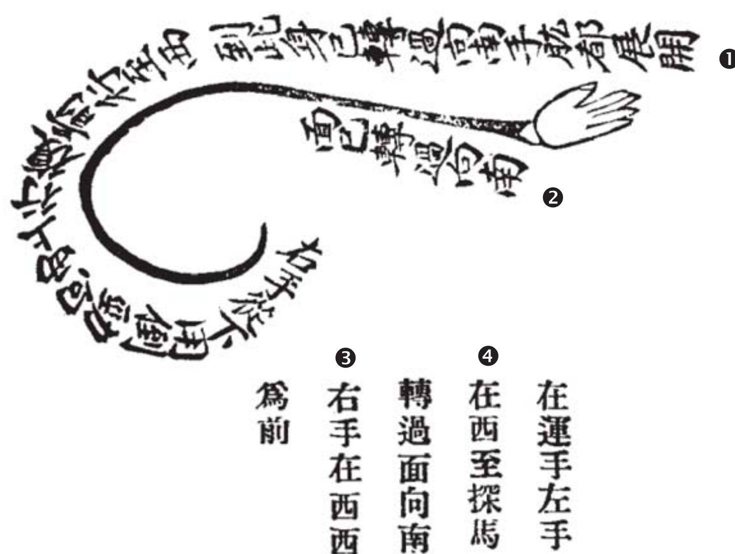


Fig. 2.24.2 Diagram of internal essence flowing through both hands

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the right hand moves west, upward and forward, in reverse direction of *jin* force;
- ❷ at the same time, the torso turns to south with both arms out-stretched forward;
- ❸ the torso faces south in the final movement;
- ❹ when moving the hands, place the left one west with a 'pat-on-horse' gesture while the torso turns south; at the same time, place the right hand in front at the west.

3. Diagram of the left hand's movement



FIG. 2.24.3 DIAGRAM OF THE LEFT HAND'S MOVEMENT

Inscriptions:

❶ the left hand moves from its westerly position downward and forward toward the east, rotating the intrinsic force from outside in;

❷ it comes to a rest in front of the left nipple.

3. Diagram of the feet movement

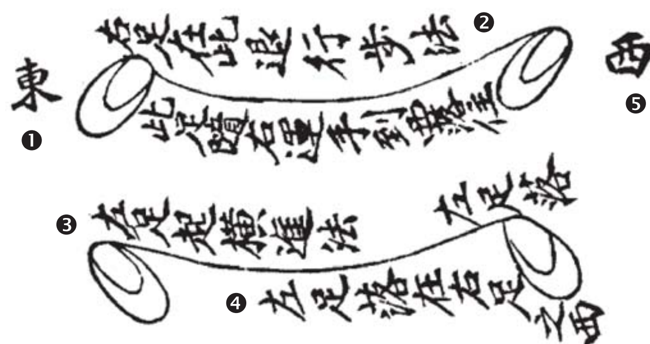


Fig. 2.24.4 Diagram of the feet movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ east;
- ❷ following the right hand's movement west, the right foot takes a step back, setting itself on the ground at this location;
- ❸ the left foot takes a transverse step forward to flatten on the ground at this location;
- ❹ the left foot flattens on the ground west from right foot;
- ❺ west.

4. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The *Gao Tan Ma* posture supposes that the right hand is placed forward and upward while the left hand rests behind it slightly below, in front of the left side of the chest. This can be interpreted as follows: the empty outstretched hand is in fact the embodiment of solidity, while the solid hand, placed inside in front of heart, is actually empty in the image of the *Li* (fire) structure — a divided line in the center of two undivided ones.

The front foot is associated with emptiness while the back to solidity. The crotch is rounded, the knees opened. The stance is formed in the way of

Zhen (thunder), symbol of movement, with two divided lines above an undivided line. The divided lines correlate with the thighs, while the undivided line corresponds to the digging in of the feet to the ground. Thus, trigram *Zhen* with *Li* above it form the hexagram Shi-he (21), symbol of mastication and punishment by pressing and squeezing.

Hence *Gao Tan Ma* is associated with hexagram Shi-he, since martial arts cannot go without attack and defense in order to protect one's p. A similar line is drawn with the upper and lower 'jaws', whose attacking qualities are mimicked by both hands — once something lies between the 'jaws', the action or mastication is activated.

Thus, the explanation for the whole hexagram states: "The existence of something between the 'jaws' of figure Yi (27) gives rise to the name of the Shi-he hexagram — 'union by means of biting through the intervening object'." The strong and weak lines are equally divided in the figure to give the suggestion of measure. Movement is represented by the lower thunder trigram while bright intelligence is connoted by the upper fire trigram. This means that before all the four limbs start to act in the nature of thunder, they should take well-considered orders from the mind/heart, the embodiment of fire. Thunder and fire (lightning) unite in the four limbs, resulting in a brilliant manifestation of the just punishment.

We see the effect of 'squeezing' through the transformation of hexagram Yi (42), when the weak (fourth) and strong (fifth) lines change their positions. This means that both arms, the left bent at the elbow and the right stretched forward, embody the *Li* figure in its expression of the Golden Mean, that is, in its sense of proceeding in the proper manner through harmonious proportion.

The great symbolism of hexagram Shi-he is formed by the trigrams for thunder and fire (with lightning as its extended form). This signifies that the mind/heart of a noble person is bright as lightning, and his four limbs move sturdily like thunder. The lowest undivided line shows its subject's, that is your opponent's, feet in stocks, whereby he is deprived of his toes.

Hence no error will occur as he cannot walk to do even the smallest evil. The second divided line shows one who judges the subject of the lowest line as one "biting only through the soft flesh of one's nose. That is not recognized as the most severe punishment." This means that you have mounted a strong position to catch the opponent and inflict a counter-attack on his nose.

The fourth undivided line shows the subject gnawing dried flesh on the bone; the fifth divided line shows the subject gnawing at dried flesh. This means that the opponent has no idea of the kind of force you can use against his aggression. The image of Shi-he indicates that although you do not 'squeeze' outside, you have squeezed inside. Indeed, any external squeeze will definitely give rise to problems, so you should avoid this by firmly managing and controlling the situation and by using foresight to avert any early development of its occurrence to preventing further danger.

Keep a transverse distance between the feet to facilitate a body turn in the image of *Li*, which has a divided line in the middle. Place the right hand above; the ribs are covered on both sides by the left palm and right elbow in the image of *Gen* (mountain). Thus the mountain stops what is empty and tears itself away from captivity, while fire, which always soars above, passes through the mind/heart. The heart is allocated to the image of fire, so fire lights the heart to launch the right hand's motion.

When fire is arrested under mountain, this gives birth to hexagram Bi (22) figure, symbolizing a badge of distinction, a decorative medal marking high rank. Hence the explanation for the whole Bi hexagram states: "The weak (third) line of Sun (41) descends, so ornamenting the Bi hexagram with a strong (third) line. Hence it is said that the ornament should have free course and success." This means that the lower part of the body is weak and is to be 'decorated', that is, strengthened with hands corresponding with mountain. "On the other hand, the strong fifth line of Ji-ji (63) advances and acts from above, thus ornamenting Bi with the weak fifth in the center of the upper mountain trigram[31]."

[31] The mountain trigram (*Gen*) symbolizes stopping.

Therefore it is said that, "Even at the time of less advantage, the ornament is nevertheless allowed to advance and take the lead." This is illustrated in the appearances of weak and strong lines which can be likened to the various planets and stars that ornament the sky. In the martial arts, this is allocated to the concept of Guest. "Elegance and intelligence denoted by the lower trigram for fire, regulated by stoppage denoted by the upper mountain trigram, suggest the observances which adorn human society." This means that the right hand in the upper position can stop to defend against an opponent's attack.

We look at the ornamental figures of the sky, thereby ascertaining changes of the seasons. We observe the signs 'ornamenting' society and understand how the process of transformation accomplishes all under heaven. This also carries through to the martial arts, where one's mind/heart is thought to be of paramount importance due to its ability to affect the minds/hearts of others by guiding the movements of the hands.

The lowest undivided line shows the subject adorning his feet, as though "he discards the carriage and walks on foot." The second divided line shows the subject "adorning his lower lip with a beard." Since the place under the lower lip is very small, this subject can only rouse himself to action by tagging along with the subject of the strong and undivided third line, who has the "the appearance of being adorned and bestowed with rich favors. Let him always maintain his firm correctness, and there will be good fortune." The good fortune of the third line's subject relies on his maintaining firm correctness in his actions, as a result of which he receives no insults from anyone. When you maintain *Gao Tan Ma*, no one dares approach closely.

The fifth divided line shows its subject to be "adorned by the occupants of heights and gardens," as horses graze there. "He always sees the point of things and never cares about outward appearance. Hence there will be good fortune in the end." The good fortune bestowed on this subject gives cause for joy and happiness, especially as no one dares to attack him.

The topmost undivided line shows its subject "adorned in simple white as his only ornament. There will be no error to the end." In other words, free-

dom from error is attained by his simple adornment in pure white. In the world between heaven and earth, colour is colourless and colourlessness is colour. Thus the colourless gives birth to the colored, while the coloured returns to the colourless. Hence, why not enjoy all styles of boxing? And why be pleased with *Gao Tan Ma* as an expression of the martial arts? Such deep appreciation of valuable traditions is the true way to fulfillment.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the Gao Tan Ma Posture*

VERSE 1

More than eight *chi*[32] in height — such a steed is a true dragon.
The peak of Mount Wu is number one among others.
To gallop a thousand miles swiftly — just resort to *Gao Tan Ma*,
Which is well paired only by the notable horse-lover Chao.

VERSE 2

The northeast lands lack dwellers;
Standing at eight *chi* the steed is not easy to mount.
If you can maintain the stance, you exceed the current trend
To cover a march of a thousand miles per day.

[32] 2.5 m.

Posture 25

RUB WITH RIGHT FOOT

You Ca Jiao

1. Diagram of the posture

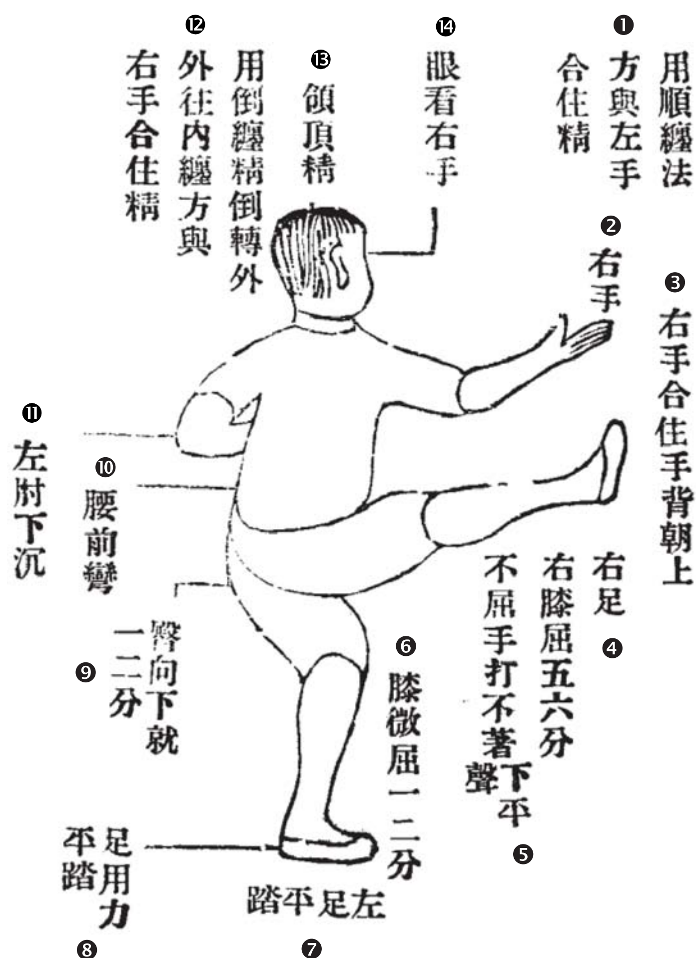


Fig. 2.25.1 Rub with Right Foot (You Ca Jiao)

Inscriptions:

❶ reel in direct rotation to close, accumulating *jing* essence in the left hand;

❷ the right hand;

❸ the back of the right hand faces up;

❹ the right foot;

❺ slightly bend the right knee about 2.5 cm; bend the right elbow to pat the right in-step with the fingers;

❻ slightly bend the left knee about 1.5 cm;

❼ the supporting left foot lies flat on the ground;

❽ the left heel stamps firmly on the ground;

❾ drop the buttock 1 cm downward;

❿ bend the waist forward;

⓫ drop the left elbow;

⓬ reel *jing* essence in reverse direction outward, then reel inward in closing to accumulate *jing* essence in the right hand;

⓭ focus *jing* essence at the top of the head, which plays the commanding role;

⓮ look at the right hand.

Posture 26

RUB WITH LEFT FOOT

Zuo Ca Jiao

1. *Diagram of the posture*



Fig. 2.26.1 Rub with Left Foot (Zuo Ca Jiao)

陳氏太極拳圖說

陳鑫

Inscriptions:

❶ reel energy from inside out;
❷ the left hand;
❸ pat the left in-step with the left palm ;
❹ the left foot;
❺ the left knee is slightly bent about 1 cm;
❻ the right knee is slightly bent;
❼ the right foot stamps firmly on the ground;
❽ drop the buttock down to support the left side of the body;
❾ bend the waist forward;
❿ drop the right elbow;
⓫ reel *jing* essence in reverse direction in closing, accumulating the essence in the left hand;
⓬ focus *jing* essence at the top of the head, which plays the commanding role;
⓭ look at the left hand.

First, move the right hand down and back in a circle until it passes in front of the left ribs toward the west. Then, move the right hand in direct rotation to pat the right in-step. While doing this, bend the torso slightly forward and 'sit' on the buttock of the supporting left leg, placing the buttock slightly backward so that you can maintain your balance and control the situation in front and behind. To keep your balance while standing on one leg, bend the left leg at the knee.

Next, set the right foot on the ground, toes pointing north. Take a step with the left foot and set it in front of the right foot, pointing the toes northwest. Raise the left foot again and pat the left in-step with the left palm. Meanwhile, the left hand moves upward and forward from the left side of the torso to rotate directly in the silk-reeling method. Bend the

waist west and 'sit' on the right buttock, facing east after performing the *Ca Jiao* posture in the right and left style. *Jing* essence at the top of the head guides energy flow downward, passing through the rounded crotch and bent knees to the feet which are dug firmly into the ground.

2. *Diagram of the posture oriented south*



Fig. 2.26.2 Movements of the right hand

Inscriptions:

- ❶ west;
- ❷ right hand moves downward from west, then toward the right ribs;
- ❸ the right side of the torso;
- ❹ the left side of the torso;
- ❺ next, the right hand moves from the right to the upper left side of the torso and forward, extending the right arm out in a patting gesture;
- ❻ the left arm is placed behind while the right hand moves forward to pat the right in-step; the left hand rests behind the right to strengthen the position;
- ❼ east.

3. *Diagram of the posture oriented north*

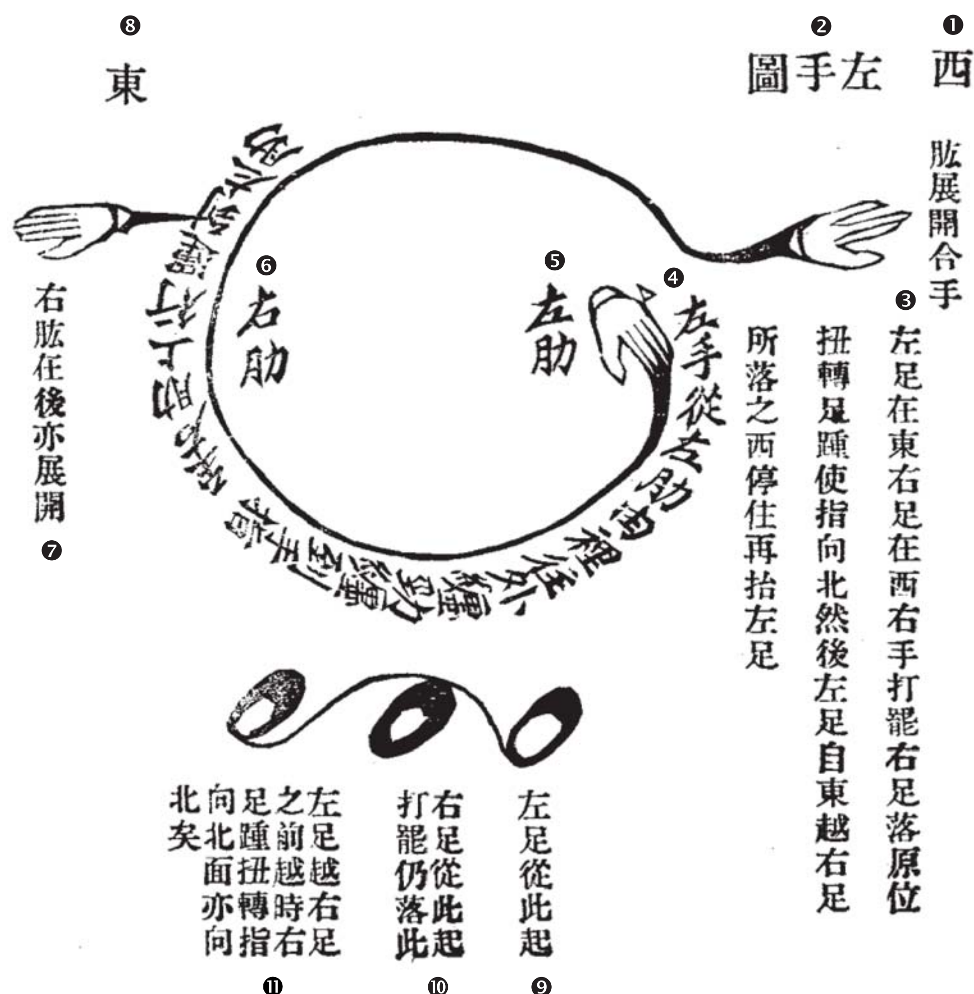


Fig. 2.26.3 Movements of the left hand and feet

Inscriptions:

- ❶ west;
- ❷ the left arm stretches forward;
- ❸ the left foot is placed east while the right west; after patting the right in-step with the right hand, the right foot settles down in its initial spot, toes pointing north; then the left foot draws in from the east to set beside the right foot at the west; from this position, raise the left leg, and pat the left in-step with the left palm;

❹ left hand moves outward from the left side of the torso to reel *jin* force toward the left fingers, then up to the right side of the torso to finally return to the left side;

❺ the left side of the torso;

❻ the right side of the torso;

❼ the right arm is positioned behind;

❽ east;

❾ lift the left foot here;

❿ lift the right foot here; after patting the right in-step with the right palm, the right foot settles back to its initial spot;

⓫ after the left foot is positioned in front of the right foot, the latter digs firmly into the ground with toes pointing north; the torso faces north.

4. Symbolic meaning of You Ca Jiao (Rub with Right Foot)

The current *You Ca Jiao* posture implies patting the right in-step with the right palm in the image of *Zhen* (thunder), symbol of movement. In this case, *Zhen* also signifies the kicking of the opponent with the right foot and toes. Trigram *Gen* (mountain), symbol of stopping and arrest, corresponds with the right hand, thus adding more strength to the right foot's kick. In boxing, this kick can be used as a forceful threat presaging hand-to-hand combat. The whole point is to raise the foot but keeping the hand down, so as to look for additional opportunities to harm the opponent.

Hence the posture is allocated to hexagram Yi (42), symbol of addition. The explanation for the entire hexagram states: "In Yi (42), we see the upper trigram for wind diminished and the lower one for thunder augmented." This means that the right hand assists the right foot by adding more force to its kick so that, "what descends from above reaches to all below, so great and brilliant is the course of its operation." The phrase, 'the brilliant course of its operation' emphasizes the benefits of the right hand dropping straight down from the upper position to pat the right in-step. It

also states that, "There will be advantage in every movement which shall be undertaken. This is evidenced by the central and correct positions of the weak second (even) and strong fifth (odd) lines, and the dispensation of blessings which they imply. Thus, there is cause for celebration." The cause for celebration exists as long as *Zhong-qi* moves forward with bent waist and the 'sitting' of the buttock to maintain proper balance, to make kick of the right leg effective.

The lowest undivided line shows that "it will be advantageous for its subject in his position to make a great movement. There will indeed be immense good fortune."

In the subsequent Guai (43) hexagram, symbol of fissures and breaking, the lowest undivided line reveals a subject whose toes are in the pinnacle of strength, allowing him advance swiftly. The fourth undivided line shows him with skin stripped from his buttocks. This means that while kicking forward, the skin of buttock is strained, so you need to 'sit' down a little to give the buttock more slack.

5. *Free Verse dedicated to the posture*

The right hand moves from the left side of the torso to draw a circle rightward;
The hand is at the level of the heart to make a line with the outstretched forearm.
Standing on the supporting left leg and kicking up with the right toes;
If you do not succeed in kicking up to the chin, kick to crotch level —
With such a technique you can knock out a foe seriously for a while.
When there is no need to apply this technique, don't apply it;
Since it should not be used rashly, don't monkey around with such a tool.

6. *Symbolic meaning of Zuo Ca Jiao (Rub with Left Foot)*

Pat the right in-step with the right palm and turn to face north. Again, raise the left leg to pat further up the left in-step with the left palm. While patting with the right palm, stand on the supporting left leg; while patting with the left palm, stand on the supporting right leg.

The supporting right leg is associated with *yin* and *Xun* (wind), released from above by the *Gen* (mountain) trigram of hexagram Gu (18), symbol of destruction and renewal. This is why standing on the supporting right leg during combat may make you feel unstable. Paradoxically, this instability may induce you to strive for stability through constant self-control, like a tree which tolerates the many worms and insects gnawing away at its roots.

The explanation for hexagram Gu (18) states: "In Gu, the strong trigram lies above and the weak one below. Thus, we have pliancy below, symbolized by wind, and stopping above, symbolized by mountain." This explanation places the left hand as the strong trigram, while the right foot below it represents the weak. This interpretation implies the state of Gu (18) is one of troubled affairs verging on ruin, only to be renewed. Through the course revealed in this hexagram, good order will be restored to all under heaven. This is signified by the patting of the in-step: he who advances will encounter the tasks that need to be done. The end of one posture is the beginning of another; the end of confusion is the beginning of order. Such is the procedure of heaven and the Law of Changes.

Thus, all movements should be done naturally in concord with the course of Nature. The lowest divided line shows "a son dealing with the troubles caused by the father." This means that the strong trigram for mountain above is like a father who acts through inaction. "If he is an able son, the father will escape the blame of having blundered." This means that if the foot can kick but the hand can pat the in-step, the perilous situation caused by the father will be resolved, because the son is the proper inheritor of his father's deed. The fifth divided line shows once more "a son dealing with the

troubles caused by his father. He obtains praise for using the tool fit for his work." This means that that you should resort to elevating the left foot to a higher level to display your *gong-fu*. Though this position may be perilous, it will generally come to an end and all under heaven will be set to order. The end of confusion is the beginning of order — such is the procedure of heaven, the Law of Changes and *gong-fu*.

7. Free verse dedicated to Zuo Ca Jiao (Rub with Left Foot)

Stand on the supporting right leg with toes pointing north;
The left hand draws an arc from the right side of the torso.
The hand is at heart level with forearm stretched out
To pat the left in-step with the left palm in the image of wind.
Kick straight at the opponent's crotch
To see where his heroism will be after all.

8. Four-character a line verse dedicated to You Ca Jiao (Rub with Right Foot)

Bear in mind the entirety of this position
So as to apply its movements and directions clearly:
The left foot first takes a transverse step;
The right heel is steady on the ground.
The right hand moves in an arc from the left ribs
To pat the right in-step at the level of the shoulder.

9. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture

Verse 1

First take a transverse step south with the left foot,
Then raise the right foot in the air to the level of the face;
The right hand moves in an arc from the left side of the torso
To pat the right in-step which rises up to meet the right palm.

Verse 2

Face south standing on the stalk-like supporting left leg;
The right hand pats down without problems.
From head to foot the whole body is like a drawn bow;
The east swallows the west in alternating pats.

10. Four-character a line verse dedicated to Zuo Ca Jiao (Rub with Left Foot)

From facing south
Turn around to the north —
The supporting right leg is a stalk,
While the left leg flies in an upward kick.
The left hand draws from the right ribs
To pat down harmlessly.
Zhong-qi flows toward the foot
To strengthen the entire form.

11. Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture

Again, rotate the right foot with toes pointing north
And bend the whole body vigorously.
The left hand draws from the right side of the torso to pat down;
All the energy threads are knit closely together.

12. Free verse dedicated to the left and right styles of the posture (Zuo You Ca Jiao)

First imprint the posture clearly in your mind/heart
Then take a transverse step turning from north to south.
First the supporting left foot plays the part of a stalk,
While the right hand draws a circle from the left side of the torso.
Then raise the right foot in the air to make a kick
And pat the right in-step with the right palm at shoulder level.
After patting the right in-step, take a transverse step
With right toes pointing north.
Set the left foot in front of the supporting right leg;
Move the left hand from the right ribs in a downward arc
Spread the left arm freely leftward to pat the left in-step with a slap.
Focus energy at the top of the head
Sending it down to the kicking foot.
Distinguish the four cardinal directions clearly
To approach with a tiger's roar like a gust of wind
Produced as a result of the palm's contact with the in-step.
The Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi* purifies *jing* essence
Let it be agile and bright, like the graceful movements of a fair lady.
Hold fast to the order of importance,
Hold in the reverence generated in your heart,
And the physical strength will accumulate gradually in the correct order
To perfect your breathing within a decade.
To dispute this will be in vain; the only thing you should know
Is that a martial arts adept holds fast to the equilibrium.

Posture 27

WELL-BALANCED SINGLE WHIP

Zhong Dan Bian

1. Diagram of the first half of the posture

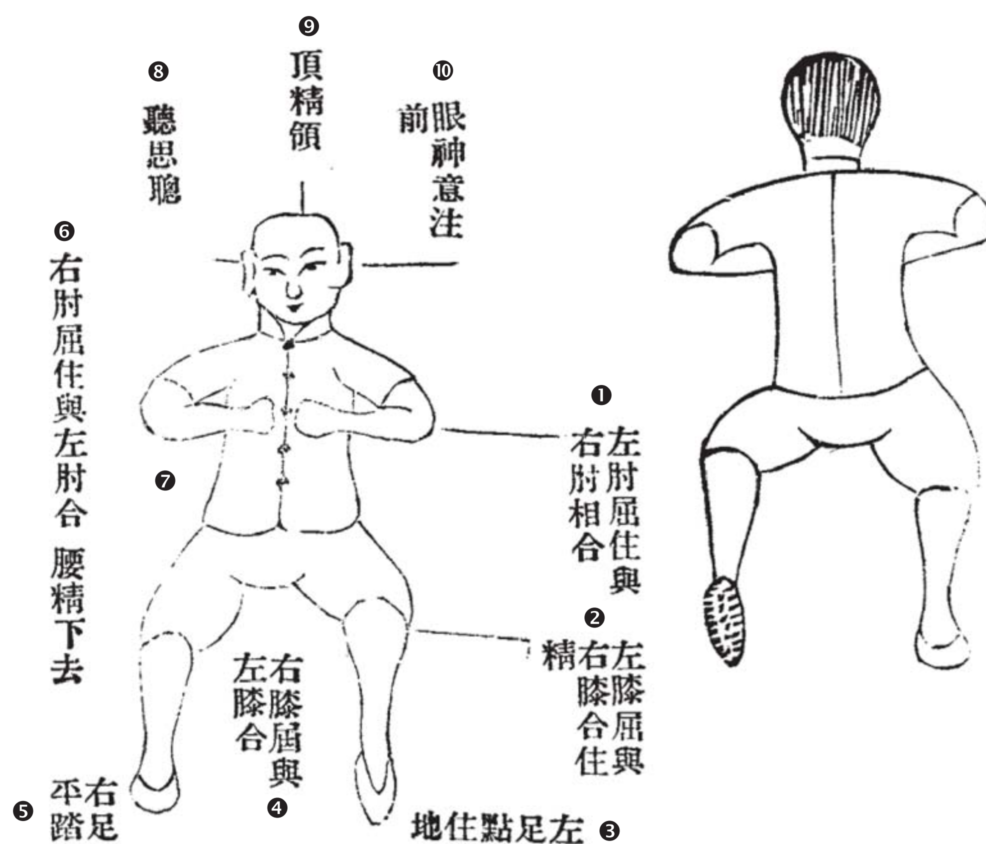


Fig. 2.27.1 First half of Well-Balanced Single Whip (Zhong Dan Bian)

Inscriptions:

❶ bend the left elbow and form an energy connection with the right arm;
❷ bend the left knee and form an energy connection with the right knee;
❸ draw the left foot to the ground;
❹ bend the right knee and form an energy connection with the left knee;
❺ flatten the right foot on the ground;
❻ bend the right elbow and form an energy connection with the left elbow;
❼ *jing* essence of the waist flows down;
❽ keep your surroundings under close surveillance with your ears;
❾ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;
❿ look straight ahead.

2. Diagram of the second half of the posture

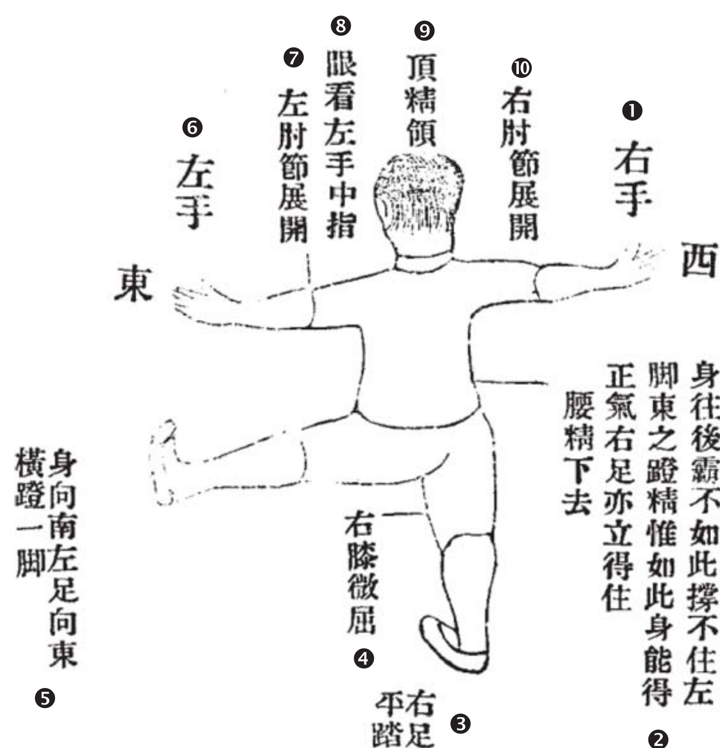


Fig. 2.27.2 Second half of Well-Balanced Single Whip (Zhong Dan Bian)

Inscriptions:

❶ the right hand faces west;

❷ lean the torso slightly backward and kick the left sole eastward while standing on the supporting right leg; hold fast to *Zheng-qi* penetrating throughout the body while the kicking; *jing* essence of the waist flows down;

❸ flatten the right sole on the ground;

❹ bend the right knee slightly;

❺ the torso faces south; the left sole faces east to make a cross kick;

❻ the left hand faces east;

❼ stretch out the left arm;

❽ look at the middle finger-tip of the left hand;

❾ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;

❿ stretch out the right arm.

After patting the left in-step with the left palm, turn the torso from north to west then back south. Draw the left foot to the ground facing east. Bend both arms at the elbows. Stretch out the left arm suddenly eastward and the right arm westward to form the *Zhong Dan Bian* posture, otherwise known as 'Wind Penetrates the Ears From Both Sides' or 'Strike Opponent's Ears With Both Hand'. As soon as both arms spread out, quickly move the hands upward and sideways to ear level as if bringing wind to the ears. Hence the origin of its alternative name.

After both arms spread out sideways, kick the left sole eastward. At the same time, lean the torso a little west to balance east and west sides sturdily. Stand upright between both directions on the supporting right leg, which is slightly bent at the knee to provide the body with proper balance and steadiness. Make sure you connect the *jing* essence at the top of the head with the bent knee of the supporting right leg. Then sit slightly downward at the hip-bone to allow the thighs to relax in their upright stance between

east and west. Only in this way can the natural equilibrium be found. What seems naturally straight is not strictly so, just as true uprightedness may seem to be slanting. Although the torso is slightly inclined, use effort to find the point of equilibrium, that is, the Golden Mean. The power of the Golden Mean lies somewhere between certainty and uncertainty, and cannot be excluded from human activities.

3. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

*Qi*an (heaven) is the first figure among the eight trigrams and allocated to the top of the head, where *jing* essence of the whole body accumulates and acts as the commanding post. To provide concentrated essence, keep your eyes on the left hand and left foot. Stretch both arms sideways using the power of *Qi*an, while the left foot kicks with its sole in the image of *Zhen* (thunder). Stand on the supporting right leg while the left foot kicks east with lightning speed.

Hence trigrams *Zhen* with *Qi*an above it form hexagram Wu-wang (25), the symbol of freedom from insincerity, purity of mind, happiness and minimal hesitation. Wu-wang (25) emphasizes what is great and original, what is penetrating, advantageous, correct and firm. But if the actions of its subject are not correct, he will fall into error, rendering it disadvantageous for him to move in any direction.

The explanation for the entire Wu-wang (25) hexagram states that "In Wu-wang, there is the strong trigram coming from outside." This means that the upper trigram *Gen* (mountain) of hexagram Da-xu (26) enters together with the lower trigram *Zhen* (thunder) to form hexagram Wu-wang, embodied by the kick with the left sole. This is reflected in the strong lowest line of Wu-wang, which becomes a lord or the main line of the lower trigram of Wu-wang.

"We have the attributes of the power of motion and of strength; we have the strong line of the fifth place in the central position, which is countered

by the weak second line." This interpretation implies assistance from the left hand (heaven) while kicking with the left sole (thunder). In addition, the explanation that "There will be great progress proceeding from correctness", refers to the upright position of the body.

Therefore it is stated that, "What is great and originating, penetrating, advantageous, correct and firm — such are the attributes of the superior person responded to by the appointment of heaven. But if his action is not correct, he will fall into errors, and it will not be advantageous for him to move in any direction. Whither can he, who thinks he is free from all insincerity, proceed? Can anything be done advantageously by him for whom the will and appointment of heaven does not help?" This means that when the time is right for your to kick the opponent with your left sole, do it properly and heaven, that is success, will be on your side.

If your mind/heart is inspired by good motives, is there any place your *Zhong-qi* cannot take you? The lowest undivided line shows its subject "free from all insincerity. His advance will be accompanied by good fortune." When the subject who is free from insincerity makes any movement, she will get what she desires, because sincerity can indeed move the hearts of people. Therefore for the double attack with hand and foot, hit and kick simultaneously.

The fourth undivided line shows a subject for whom "there will be no error" if he firmly holds fast his correctness. Single Whip can be performed with or without making the kick and strike, depending on your level of accomplishment.

4. The Pre-Birth Force (jing essence)

In the *Lan Zha Yi* posture the extension of the right arm must be closely connected with the final movement of the left hand. After this, the left hand draws into the Single Whip or Well-balanced Single Whip position with both arms slightly bent at the elbows to wrap the opponent's arm from

the outside. At this point, coil *jing* essence in direct rotation and spread out both arms to the sides. Kicking with the left sole, use the same direct reeling effect to bring force to the left sole. The right foot also reels force in direct rotation to provide the stability for the supporting right leg.

5. Seven-character a line verse of the Zhong Dan Bian Posture

Verse 1

> The body's stance is elegant and upright, without any slanting;
> Meanwhile, both arms are extended sideways.
> Kick with the left sole to the east, relying fully on the supporting right leg,
> Which like a lofty tree pierces the sky.

Verse 2

> Both arms are suddenly gathered together
> Then suddenly spread out sideways;
> Magnificently Refined Energy of *Yuan-qi*
> Flows rapidly down the mainstream.
> The right leg is slightly bent to provide grounding
> For the left leg hanging in the air at mid-height.

Posture 28

STRIKE DOWN LIKE PLANTING INTO THE GROUND

Ji Di Chui

1. *Diagram of the posture*

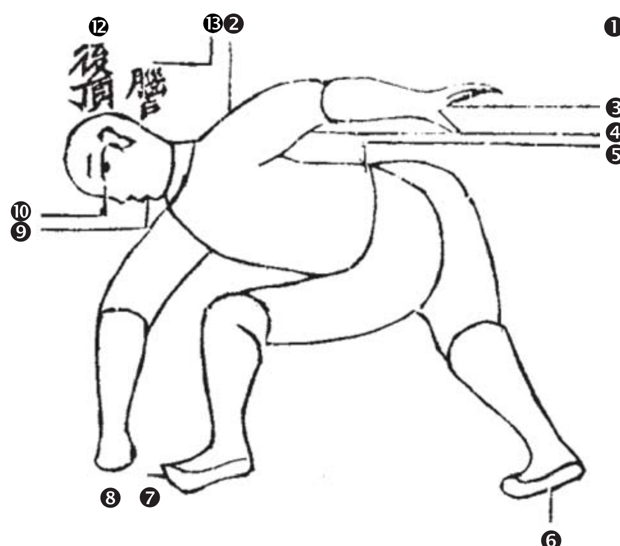


Fig. 2.28.1 Strike Down like Planting into the Ground (Ji Di Chui)

Inscriptions:

❶ after kicking the opponent with your left sole, the *Ji Di Chui* posture requires you to take two steps forward using the *Lou-xi Ao-bu* technique to then strike downward;

❷ the torso bows forward; the right shoulder drops downward while the left lifts upward;

❸ the left hand is placed behind at the level of the upper back;

❹ the fourth divided line of figure Gen (52) shows its subject "keeping at rest at the level of his upper trunk"; he keeps himself free from agitation and maintains control over the situation, meaning that the position of the torso is under control from both sides, in front and behind;

❺ the third undivided line shows its subject "keeping at rest at the level of his waist, separating the ribs from the lower part of his body"; when the lower and upper muscles of your back do not respond to each other due to their separation, they become flabby;

❻ the second divided line of Gen (52) shows its subject "keeping at rest before both his calves move"; this is all about the rear right leg;

❼ the lowest divided line of Gen (52) shows its subject "keeping at rest before his toes start to move"; here the left leg is bent at the knee, which faces up directly at the left nipple;

❽ the right fist has to reach ground level so as to be 'planted' into the ground in an incisive attack;

❾ the fifth divided line of Gen (52) shows its subject "keeping at rest at the level of the mouth or cheek, so that his words are all orderly, and thus occasion for repentance will disappear"; from this we know that the subject is in harmony with his central position and so acts correctly;

❿ look at the right fist;

⓫ acupoints Hou-ding and Nao-hu are located face up on the nape to form a vertical line with the left in-step; as you face down, your back looks up;

⓬ acupoints Hou-ding and Nao-hu are located on nape;

⓭ Gen (52), the topmost undivided line, shows its subject's good fortune due to his dedication to maintaining a state of restfulness: the torso rests between both arms, while the shoulders and hands are involved in the process of obtaining the target; to the end, the subject shows himself to be generous and good in his dealings.

陳氏太極拳圖說

The *Zhong Dan Bian* posture requires kicking the left foot east. After kicking, drop the left foot at the east to become the supporting leg, and step the right foot forward past the left foot, to the east. Next step the left foot forward again past the right foot. After that, bow the torso down forward so that the distance between the left knee and left nipple is just a couple of *cun*, otherwise you will not be able to touch the surface of the ground when you strike your right fist into the ground beside the left toes. The back of the right hand points east to accumulate *yang* essence in the downward strike which simulates the act of planting into the ground.

After kicking with the left sole and taking a right step forward, the left hand draws a reverse circle, while the right hand, in concert with the right leg stepping east, moves forward in a brush-knee gesture then back in a circle. When taking a step east with the left foot, the left hand moves simultaneously forward in a brush-knee gesture then goes behind the torso at the back of the left ribs, then up again. At the same time, the right hand strikes down to the ground in one big circle with the left hand. This technique is called *Xia Yan Shou Chui* (Strike Down). When taking the final step with the left foot, the left knee comes close to the left nipple, as the torso bows at the waist and leans forward and down.

Meanwhile, Hou-ding, the leading acupoint located on the nape points up, while acupoint Shen-ting on the forehead and Cheng-jiang below the lower lip point down. Thus, Hou-ding holds the face and neck at the appropriate distance from the ground. The correct position of the head helps open and round-in the crotch, thus providing proper stability for both feet.

While applying the strike technique, position your back almost horizontally, just a few *cun* higher than the level of the buttocks. If you press your back lower down, straightening your torso back upright may hurt your back and cause a backache. Hence the crotch must be rounded-in and open and the feet flattened on the ground in a stable position to connect the head with the rear right leg bent at the knee, through to the heart and along the backbone.

陳鑫

2. How the posture was taught in my childhood

Firstly, the adults practiced to bring the torso down in the proper style, and then both my brothers taught me to press the back down and straighten it up in order to make me feel the flow of *qi*. Before I started to perform the posture my brothers demonstrated how to twist the posture around. When both brothers tumbled down in the twisting posture, I realized that the entire mechanism of the technique wholly depended on the concentration of *jing* essence at the top of the head. In fact, this is the location from which the lower body is governed.

Jing essence is directed downward to pass through the tucked-in and open crotch, then toward the feet flattened on the ground. Meanwhile, the internal power of the waist or loins rotates the torso so that even the strength of a few men cannot push your back down. Thus, my two good brothers taught me that when *Zhong-qi* penetrates deeply into the feet, no-one and nothing can stop my actions.

3. The Pre-Birth Force (jing essence)

a) Diagram of the left hand's movement

After kicking the left sole east and taking the first step east with the left foot, the left hand uses intrinsic force to flow in a reverse circle.

(see Fig. 2.28.2)

b) Diagram of the right hand's movement

Take a second step east with the right foot and simultaneously move the right hand in a reverse circle to apply the *jin* force which issues forth. Thus, the left hand draws a full circle, while the right hand draws a half circle, clenching into a fist and to strike downward in the second half of the circle.

(see Fig. 2.28.2)

c) Top half of the circle

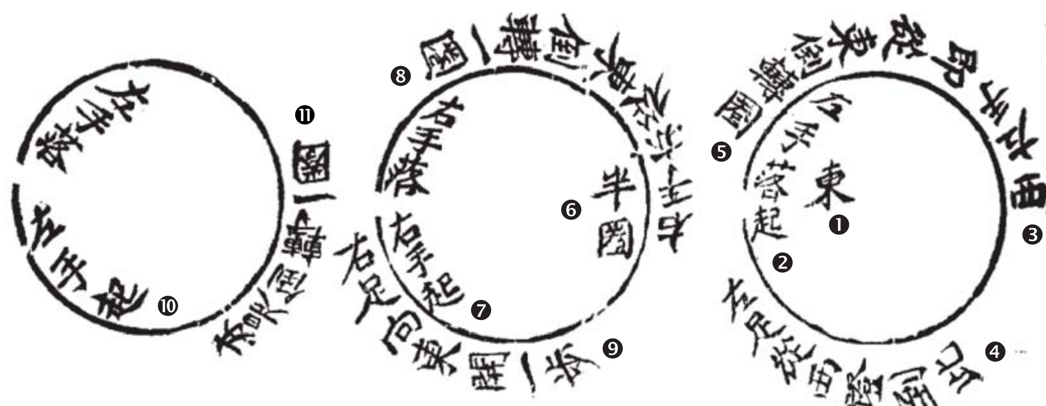


Fig. 2.28.2 Top half of the circle

Inscriptions:

Right circle

- ❶ east;
- ❷ the place where the left hand starts and completes its circular movement;
- ❸ west;
- ❹ the left foot kicks from the west to this point;
- ❺ the left hand moves from the east in a reverse circle.

Middle circle

- ❻ semi-circle;
- ❼ the place where the right hand completes its movement and starts drawing a circle;
- ❽ the right hand moves from the east in a reverse circle;
- ❾ the right foot takes a step east.

Left circle

- ❿ the right hand draws a reverse circle;
- ⓫ the place where the left hand completes its movement and starts drawing a circle.

d) Bottom half of the circle

This is the starting place from which the left foot takes a step east, moving past the right foot. In fact, this is the second eastward step of the right foot. Before this step, after kicking the left sole east, the left heel pushes on the ground to initiate the first left step forward.

Thus, there are three steps in total — two left steps and one right step.

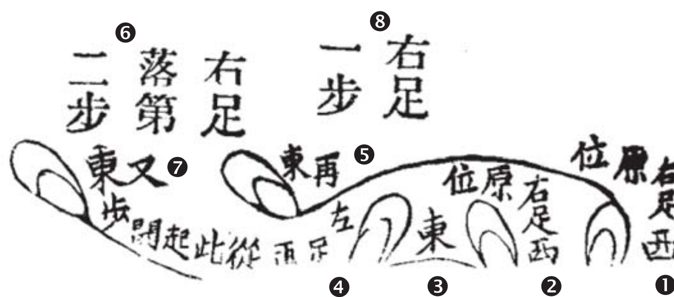


Fig. 2.28.3 Bottom half of the circle

Inscriptions:

❶ the initial position of the right foot at the west;

❷ the initial position of the right foot at the west;

❸ east;

❹ the point from which the left foot takes a step;

❺ east;

❻ the point where the right foot completes the second step;

❼ east again;

❽ the right foot takes a step.

e) Diagram of the Left Hand's Movement

After flattening the left foot on the ground in the third step east and bowing forward at the waist, the left hand applies *jin* force whilst drawing in a

reverse circle. At the same time, the right hand clenches into a fist to strike down, while the torso bows.

After the left sole kicks east, drop the left heel on the ground to take the first left step. Then take a right step east (the second step), and a left step again (the third step). Hence there are three sequential steps east in total. After taking the third left step, the right hand draws half a circle downward. Simultaneously, the left hand moves backward and up to take a position behind the torso, while the right hand continues to move in a circle up, until it clenches into a fist and strikes down to ground level from the right side of the head. The head is placed almost parallel to the ground, but should not extend beyond the left toes, which are positioned 7-8 *cun* to the front.

4. Symbolic meaning of the posture

In *Ji Di Chui*, the whole body is oriented downward. Only the left hand is positioned upward and behind the torso, while the right fist 'plants' itself into the ground beside the left toes. So, there are three points of contact with the ground: the right fist and both feet in a steady stance. For this reason, the posture is associated with hexagram Gen (52), symbol of inaction, stopping, checking and opposition. Its motto may be stated as "to act through inaction." Once inaction reaches its peak, it transforms again into action and the cycle recommences in natural rotation. This principle is interpreted in various ways in the martial arts, such as: "Breathing consists of one inhalation and one exhalation", or "One movement and one stillness make a cycle of endless wonder, the magical effect."

The Gen (52) hexagram is formed by two trigrams representing mountain, one on top of the other. In other words, Gen (52) consists of one yang/strong line above two yin/weak lines. In other words, one *yang* is able to stop two yins. On the other hand, the *yang* line comes up from the bottom position until it stops at the top, hence the derivation for the symbol of Gen (52). Earth at the foot of a mountain does not diminish the qualities

of mountain — nothing can pass through its limitless foot. The upper and lower trigrams of the hexagram correspond exactly to each other but do not interact. Hence Gen (52) represents the back, the part of the body opposite to the front, face, persona or self. When losing all consciousness of self, such a person "walks in her courtyard and, not seeing any other persons in it, there is no blame nor error."

Again, the explanation for the entire hexagram states: "Gen denotes stopping or resting: resting when it is time to rest and acting when it is time to act. When one's movements and rest all occur at the proper time, one's path toward progress is brilliant and intelligent. Resting at one's resting point is resting in one's proper place." The upper and lower trigrams of the hexagram correspond exactly to each other, but do not interact. Hence it is said that the subject of Gen (52) "does not have consciousness of self, so that when he walks in his courtyard he does not see any persons in it." He does not discriminate between himself and others, 'thus will be no blame or error.'

As mentioned before, the great symbolism of hexagram Gen (52) is formed by two trigrams representing mountain, one on top of the other. In accordance with this, the superior person rests when it is time to rest. She does not go in her thoughts beyond the duties of her position. The lowest divided line shows its subject "keeping at rest before his toes start to move. There will be no error; but it will be advantageous for him to be persistently firm and correct." "The subject of the line keeps at rest before his toes start," hence he does not fail in what is correct, according to the general idea of the hexagram.

The second divided line shows its subject "keeping at rest before the calves of her legs move." "She cannot help the subject of the (third) line above whom she follows," as he whom she follows will not retreat to listen to her, so she is dissatisfied in her mind.

The third undivided line shows its subject "keeping at rest at the level of his loin, separating the ribs from the lower part of his body. When the lower

and upper muscles of his back do not respond to each other, being separate, they become flabby. The situation is so perilous that can be compared only with a sudden heart attack." Hence when "The subject of the line keeps at rest on the level of his loin," the danger from his doing so produces a sudden heart attack.

The fourth divided line shows its subject "keeping at rest at the level of her upper trunk. There will be no error." This means that the subject keeps herself free from agitation and has the situation under full control.

The fifth divided line shows its subject "keeping at rest at the level of his neck or throat, so that his words are all orderly. And thus cause for repentance will disappear." This means that the subject acts correctly because he is in harmony with his central position.

The topmost undivided line shows its subject "devotedly maintaining his restfulness. There will indeed be good fortune." As a result, she shows herself generous and good in her business.

Striking the right fist into the ground in a planting motion implies that the right arm is extended in the image of the lower mountain trigram, in which the topmost *yang*/strong line correlates with the right fist, while the right toes digging into the ground and left toes stamping on the ground are associated with the bottom and middle *yin*/weak lines. As for the upper mountain trigram, it corresponds to the area from the occipital bone to the nape, down the spine to the 21st vertebra. The topmost *yang*/strong line of the trigram is allocated to the buttocks, while the other two *yin*/weak lines correspond to the left and right sides of the torso, that is, the left and right ribs.

Generally speaking, the body image of the Gen (52) hexagram can be described in terms of stopping and resting, as follows: the power[33] accumulates at the top of the head; the essence of the crotch sinks down and the essence of the waist is applied in abundance to express the idea of resting

[33] *jing* essence.

and stillness. In the previous moment, you kicked out with the left sole and took three steps: two with the left foot and one with the right; at the same time, you drew both hands in reverse circles to bring your movement to a peak, after which the situation naturally returned to motionlessness at the appropriate time.

As mentioned above, "Gen denotes stopping or resting: resting when it is time to rest and acting when it is time to act. When one's movements and rest all occur at the proper time, one's path toward progress is brilliant and intelligent. Resting at one's resting point is resting in one's proper place." When resting reaches its peak, it has to be transformed into action again in the image of the subsequent posture.

5. *Seven-characters a line verses devoted to the Ji Di Chui Posture*

Verse 1

Turn aside to face south,
Kick with the left sole eastward
To see the effect on the foe's face.
Take three steps in sequence
To strengthen the waist and feet —
To go deep into a tiger's den
You should feel your way.

Verse 2

Let your feet go forth eagerly,
After making a kick with the left sole east
And setting the left heel on the ground.
Strike down with a fist,
Which brings your glory to life;
Then turn around in a wish for soaring flight.

Posture 29

Double Raise Kick

Er Qi Jiao

1. Diagram of the posture

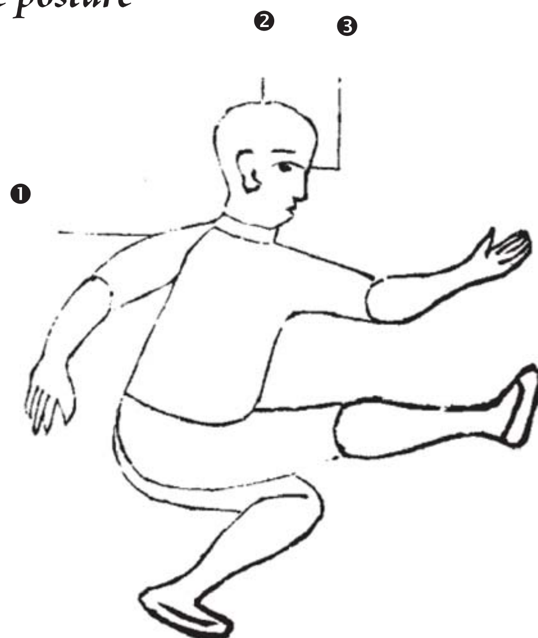


Fig. 2.29.1 Double Raise Kick (Er Qi Jiao)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ your shoulders should be perfectly relaxed and held down, despite its tendency to rise up in concert with the right foot's leap;
- ❷ focus *jing* essence at the top of the head to assign energy to the whole body;
- ❹ look at the right hand.

After striking down as though planting into the ground, turn around and jump up so that the right palm, after drawing a circle in direct rotation, pats The right in-step while flying in mid-air; meanwhile, the left hand guides the left foot inward to recoil up and down as a suspension support for the right foot to fly up and be patted by the right palm.

Make the flying kick with the right toes, but before this, the left foot makes a preceding leap in the style of Guest.After completing the downward strike, turn around to make a double jump, first with the left leg then with the right; without interruption, also pat the right in-step with the right palm as the main gesture of the posture produced in the manner of Host.

The body, the mind/heart and internal power should focus the whole body's energy on the right foot's leap into the air to head level; don't fly too high above the head as you need to keep the shoulders at an even level during the leap.

After the leap and quick turn around is completed, the right hand draws a circle in direct rotation to pat the right in-step, while the left hand draws a circle in reverse direction to assist the right hand with internal power , in the manner of a soldier stationed at the rear who creates obstructions and raises doubts about the fighting efficiency of the troops. In this situation, the right hand assumes the role of vanguard, followed by the other parts of body; the right hand moves toward the right in-step to slap it lightly and is 'in doubt' between the right foot and right shoulder.

The *Er Qi Jiao* posture derives its name from the fact that both left and right legs jump and kick in sequence whilst doing a leap to the height of 4-5 *chi*. After the downward 'planting' strike into the ground against the opponent from the east, you quickly turn around to counter-attack against the aggressor coming from behind. At the same time, the right hand draws a circle upwards then north and down again, while the left hand moves in a circle upward then down, while the left foot jumps up synchronously. While airborne, the left foot jump is immediately followed by the right foot's leap high into the air, kicking with the right toes before the left foot

lands on the ground. To perform this move properly, you must direct the whole body's force and spirit upwards. Stretch the right toes in the kick so that the right in-step becomes flat and well prepared for a right palm pat, making sure your fingers are stuck together. The right hand draws a quick semi-circle upward and forward to pat the right in-step with a slap.

Both feet land on the ground in sequence — the left foot lands an instant earlier — to immediately take their designated positions: a right bow step in front with the right foot toes pointing west, and the left foot placed behind. In terms of feet activity, this posture counts as the largest in the entire routine. However, since the right hand's circular movement is so wide, it puts this kicking posture at the lower grade of kicking techniques. Hence students should start learning from 'settling the gates', that is, the introduction to the posture's pattern, and only then proceed to patting moves.

After completing the Strike Down posture, the left hand moves up while the right hand draws a circle from east to west and downward, then back east and upwards, to pat the right toes with the palm in the front of the head. *Er Qi Jiao*, with the lower left and upper right kicking moves, fits into the middle grade of kicking techniques. The final kick into the air with the right toes, however, is assigned to the upper grade of kicking techniques, as it is quite difficult for the right hand to pat the right in-step while flying in the air immediately after striking down with the fist.

Hence in order to re-accumulate internal essence, it is necessary to draw a circle in direct rotation between the high kick and landing movements. Thus the right hand draws a circle in direct rotation, while the left hand draws a reverse circle to provide the right hand with power from the side. Meanwhile, the energy accumulated at the right hand as a result of drawing the circle flows down to the legs, first the left leg then the right, enabling them to leap into the air more effectively. A lot of strength is needed to overcome gravity for a broad double jump: first you need strength to raise the body up, then more strength to kick the right toes forward. After landing, both feet point south, while both hands remain at shoulder level pointing sideways: the right hand to the west, the left to the east in Single Whip style.

2. *Internal power (nei jing)*

A) Diagram of the right hand's movement in the lower grade Er Qi Jiao posture

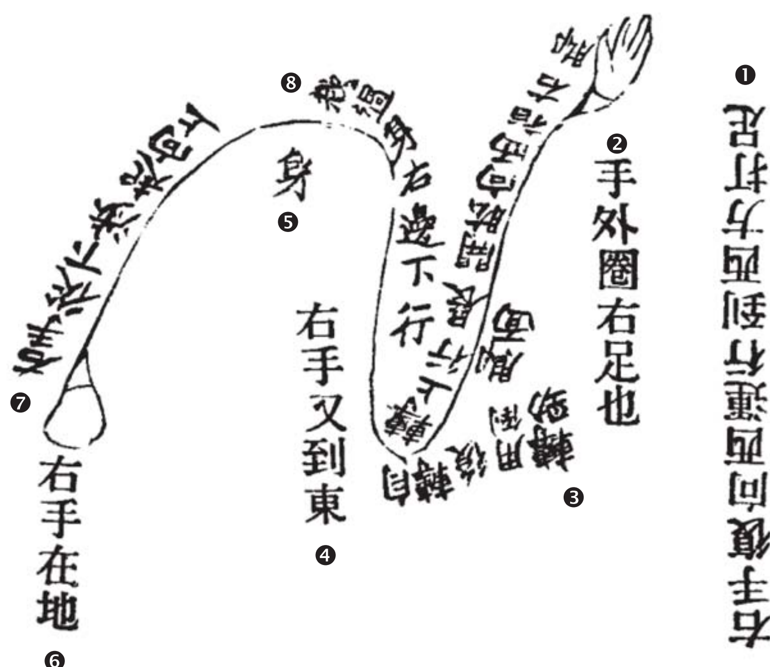


Fig. 2.29.2 Diagram of the right hand's movement in the lower grade Er Qi Jiao posture

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the right hand returns in a circle to the west to pat the right in-step which points west;
- ❷ at the same time, the right hand rotates outward with the right toes;
- ❸ while turning the torso around, apply *jin* force flowing in reverse direction;
- ❹ the right hand moves east;
- ❺ the body;
- ❻ the place where the right fist plants into the ground;
- ❼ the right hand moves up to pass in front of the torso, then downward and to the right until it stops beside the right hip, knuckles facing up;
- ❽ turn the right hand upward in a semi-circle, as the fist turns opens into a palm to stretch the arm forward and pat the right toes and in-step with the fingers.

b) Diagram of right hand's movement in the middle grade Er Qi Jiao posture

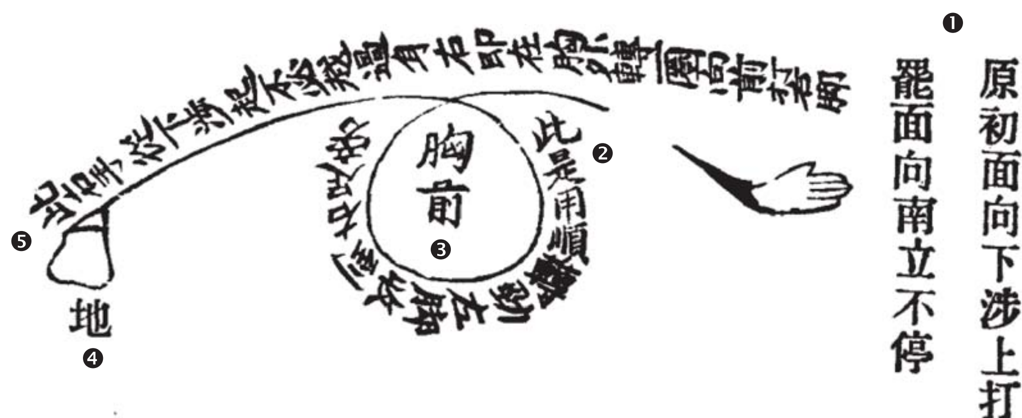


Fig. 2.29.3 Diagram of the right hand's movement in the middle grade Er Qi Jiao posture

Inscriptions:

- ❶ face down at the initial position; after completing the posture, face south in an immovable stance;
- ❷ apply *jin* force flowing in direct rotation; withdraw the left foot to place it beside the right one
- ❸ in front of the chest;
- ❹ the place where the right fist plants into the ground;
- ❺ from this place the right hand moves upward; it is unnecessary for it to pass in front of the torso, as it rotates outward in a circle then forward to pat on the right toes.

At first sight, the double raised kicking seems to be a middle grade technique. However, Fig. 2.29.4 shows that this deceptively simple move is actually quite difficult, as it can only be executed by an experienced *gong-fu* practitioner for whom the height of the leap is limitless. Moreover, one never knows the particular circumstance and environment in which the technique is going to be applied.

c) Diagram of right hand's movement in the upper grade Er Qi Jiao posture

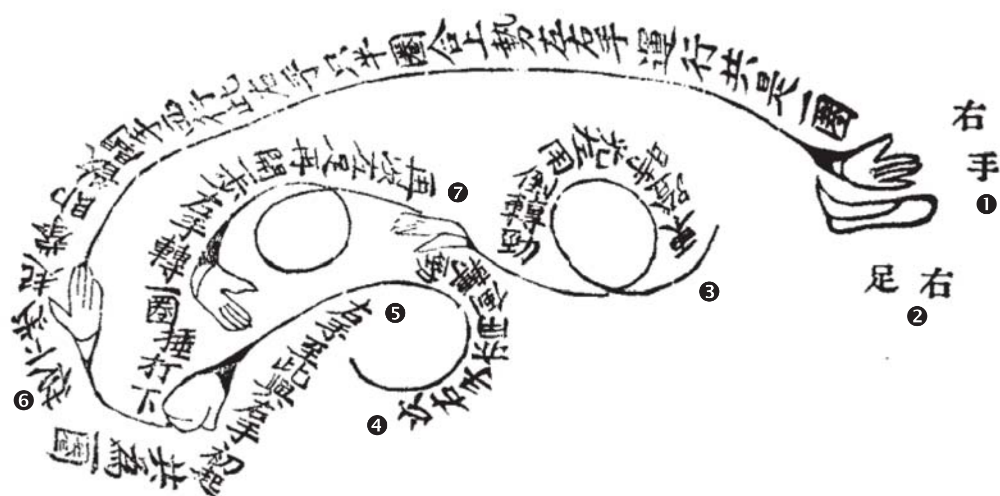


Fig. 2.29.4 Diagram of three circles illustrating the movement of both hands

Inscriptions:

❶ the right hand;

❷ the right foot;

❸ [right circle]: when kicking with the left sole, apply *jin* force flowing in reverse direction;

❹ [middle circle]: now *jin* force of the right hand runs in reverse direction;

❺ simultaneously, the left hand draws a circle. The last half of the circle is made by the right hand just before patting the right in-step;

❻ both hands draw a full circle each;

❼ [left circle]: again, taking a step forward with the left foot as the left hand draws a circle. Here, the right hand returns to its initial position. At this place, the right fist plants into the ground after drawing a full circle. Then, the right fist opens its palm while moving in a semicircle upwards.

3. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The *Er Qi Jiao* posture requires that the left foot first rises in a leap, so this move is associated with the *Zhen* (thunder) trigram, symbol of movement or feet. When right foot becomes airborne, it correlates with *Zhen* too. Hence *Er Qi Jiao* is associated with hexagram Zhen (51), symbol of precaution and startling movement. As one cannot be at rest for too long, both feet start to move, which causes the whole body to follow suit and rise up with force and spirit.

The lowest and fourth lines of hexagram Zhen are undivided and strong, hence they are allocated to movement, while the divided and weak lines at the second, third, fifth and sixth positions are led and stimulated by the two strong lines to rise up. When the motionlessness of the preceding posture reaches its peak, the current *Er Qi Jiao* posture follows it with a huge thunder-like shaking of both feet flying up. The height of the leap is limited only by one's level of cultivated power and spirit. Hence the *Qi*an (1) hexagram is associated with dragons soaring in the sky. One's mind/heart generates power (*jing* essence) which leads all the other sensitive organs and bodily structures to raise the body up. So another hexagram, Sui (17), is also associated with this posture. The symbol of obedience and following, Sui is formed by the trigram for marsh waters and for thunder, which hides in the midst of the marsh to cover the distance between the right fist planting into the ground and the act of 'soaring up to the sky.' In Sui, we see how the strong lower trigram for thunder obediently comes and places itself under the weak one of marsh. The attributes of the two — movement (thunder) and pleasure (marsh) — also imply the idea of *jin* force and great spirit. Though its subject may be covered with a mask of pleasant manners, she is actually able to inspire fear by shaking all within a hundred miles!

4. Five-character a line verse dedicated to the Er Qi Jiao Posture

Both feet lift up one after another
To raise the whole body for soaring into the air;
If not for the kick to the opponent's chin,
How can you see the red coloured blood stream?

5. Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the Er Qi Jiao Posture

Verse 1

Zhong-qi rises to stimulate physical strength;
The double flying kick is made while soaring high.
If it is not applied for bloodshed at the east,
Then indeed it is for smashing the bridge of the nose at the west.

Verse 2

A dragon flying in the sky — nothing good will come of it;
A thunder hidden in the midst of marsh
Indicates some hardships will come across in the arrangement
(It is extremely difficult to rise from the bottom to the top in one leap).
But through such a position you can harden your body by standing for a long time:
But first learn the way in which the Wei state resists at one leap.

Posture 30

LOOK AT A VIOLENT BEAST

Shou Tou Shi

1. Diagram of the posture

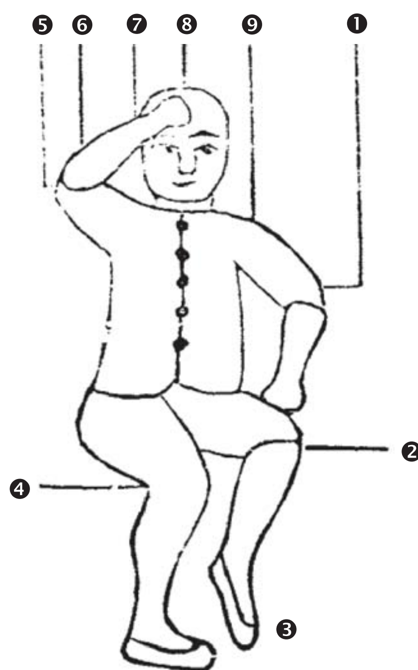


Fig. 2.30.1 Look at a Violent Beast (Shou Tou Shi)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ drop the left elbow down, pointing the elbow tip to the side;
- ❷ bend the left knee;
- ❸ draw the left foot to the ground in a left empty step; round-in the crotch and connect it closely to the supporting right leg on the ground;
- ❹ bend the right knee and use the silk-reeling method to coil *jing* essence from outside in to 'tie both knees into a bunch';

❺ the right elbow is angular outside but round inside[34];
❻ look directly at the opponent's face;
❼ the right fist rests above the fontanel;
❽ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;
❾ the shoulders are relaxed and hanging.

In the *Shou Tou Shi* posture, the right fist be placed above the forehead with knuckles facing inward, while the left fist rests above the left knee with knuckles facing out. Open your eyes widely, as if facing a ferocious beast encroaching your space — hence the derivation of the posture's name.

After completion of the preceding *Er Qi Jiao* posture, the left foot first lands on the ground, while the right foot is positioned 6-7 *cun*[35] in front. Step the right foot another *chi*[36] forward. Next, spread out both hands in reverse silk-reeling rotation, so that the right fist moves up until it stops about 12 cm in front of the middle part of the forehead, while the left hand drops to 6-8 cm above the left knee, about 20-25 cm from the lower abdomen. Draw the left foot to the ground facing west, 15 cm beside the right foot. Lower your stance to stimulate the whole body's circulation.

[34] This means that the left shoulder is relaxed and sunk with elbows hanging down.
[35] about 20 cm.
.[36] about 30 cm

2. *Internal power (nei jing)*

A) Diagram of movements of the left and right hands



Fig. 2.30.2 Diagram of movements of the left and right hands

Inscriptions:

- ❶ [around both circles]: applying the silk-reeling method, distribute the movement of both hands downward in reverse rotation; meanwhile, clench both hands into fists and move them upwards until the right fist stops above and about 12 cm in front of the forehead; the fist is filled with intrinsic force generated by the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration;
- ❷ [between the circles]: knee;
- ❸ diagram of left hand's movement;
- ❹ diagram of right hand's movement.

b) Diagram of left step forward and withdrawal of left foot

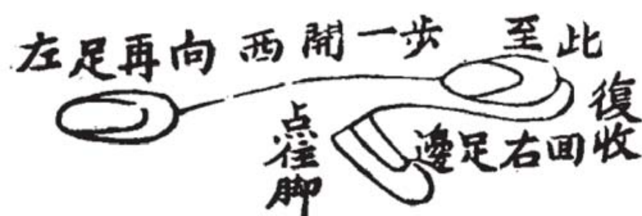


Fig. 2.30.3 Diagram of left step forward and withdrawal of left foot

Inscription: taking a step forward, move the left foot west until it stops at this place; then draw the left foot to the ground beside the supporting right foot.

c) Diagram of right foot stepping forward

Stop moving after flattening the foot on the ground.



Fig. 2.30.4 Diagram of right foot stepping forward

Inscription: take a step forward to the west with the right foot.

3. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The *Shou Tou Shi* posture requires the force and spirit of the whole body to be completely gathered in the eyes so as to scan the spiritual condition of the opponent. It implies that the practitioner's gaze is so piercing that she can determine the internal condition of the opponent from his external demeanour.

Hence this posture is associated with the Guan (20) hexagram, symbol of piercing eyes and fixed observation. In combat, this means that the practitioner can pre-empt the opponent's moves by discerning his force from his external appearance, and thus place herself in an advantageous position ready for his attacks. As the explanation for the entire hexagram states: "The superior person and great ruler of his excellence occupies the place of honor (the fifth line) in the figure, which consists of trigrams whose attributes are docility (earth) with flexibility and service (wind) above it. He is in the central position and his correct place, and thus exhibits his lessons to all under heaven." This alludes to the clear-sightedness of the upper trigram *Xun* (wind) which is literally represented by a noticeable transformation of the whites of the eyes, suggesting the ability to see situations in their entirety and with full consciousness, and hence the ability to counter-attack in a timely manner with peace in the mind/heart. The ability to observe the truth of all situations under heaven also includes the opponent's true condition. Thus, it is also said: "When people contemplate the spirit-like way of heaven, they see how the four seasons proceed without error."

The third divided line shows the subject who, "looking at the course of his own life, has to decide to advance or recede accordingly," as he desires not to pursue an erroneous path. If he doesn't lose his *Zhong-qi* in pursuit of the way of the Golden Mean, he will be able to win one hundred battles one hundred times, and his correct position in the center will become the way of heaven, that is, Nature.

The fourth divided line shows the subject who, "contemplating the customs of the kingdom's people to understand the position of worthy men in the

kingdom." Hence it will be advantageous for her, being such as she is, to seek to be a Guest of the king.

The subject of the fifth undivided line contemplates "the course of his own life to compare it with the way of the opponent. He will thus fall into no error." Indeed, for this purpose, he should contemplate the condition of the opponent.

The subject of the topmost undivided line contemplates "his own life-course and character to see if it is indeed that of 'a person with magical hands'. Thus he will not fall into error." This means that the subject cannot for a moment relinquish his mindfulness, but instead diligently reflect on his own character with a view of greater achievement.

The two upper yang/strong lines of trigram *Xun* correspond to the left and right fists. The fact that *Xun* is associated with conspicuous development of the whites of the eyes indicates that the 'observer' holds the key role in the upper figure. When *Xun* has intercourse with the upturned *Zhen* trigram, it results in the regeneration of one's force and spirit.

The lower trigram of hexagram Guan (20) is *Kun* (earth), which correlates with the abdomen. The upper body is allocated to *yang*, while the lower to *yin*. *Kun* interacts with the opposite *Qian* (heaven) to create solidity within softness. When earth above moves the wind, it conveys how *Shou Tou Shi*'s name was derived.

Others hexagrams also contribute visual imagery to illustrate the rich meanings of *Shou Tou Shi*. For example, there is hexagram Kui (38), symbol of separation and dis-unity, which offers the image of the malicious glare or the evil eye. Then there is hexagram Yi (27) who offers the image of a tiger's hungry stare, as explained here:

> *"When the weak (fourth) line of the figure rides the strong (lowest) one, the strongest bottom starts to hate the top for its weakness. Hence the weaker part should manifest its obedience, as if looking with a tiger's unwavering downward glare, while maintaining its firmness and persistence."*

Another image comes from hexagram Guai (43), whose lowest undivided line shows a subject "whose toes are in the pride of strength and make him advance hastily." In addition, there is the fifth undivided line of hexagram Ge (49) whose subject is "the great person producing changes from within himself, as the tiger does when he changes his stripes. As a result, their beauty becomes more brilliant."

Delving into all these images, we can draw a conclusion that although martial artists may in many cases have threatening and harsh appearances, their intrinsic force remains unwavering and strong.

Hence all the above-mentioned images may be coalesced into the great symbolism proffered by hexagram Ming Yi (36), symbol of internal correctness of the earth and of great brightness entering into its midst. Building on its meaning of brightness wounded or obscured by darkness, its inner trigram denotes accomplishment and brightness, while the outer trigram suggests pliancy and submissiveness. Hence both trigrams join to form the image of a superior person of clear intelligence and gentle manners.

4. Seven-character a line verses Devoted to the Shou Tou Shi Posture

VERSE 1

Severe stare and fists raised in position —
The most threatening image ever made.
The mechanism of the body for closing,
The sensitive organs are opened
To fill the chest with internal power.
The left foot is empty, drawn to the ground;
In order to open, first you need to close [37].
He who truly understands such order is a great person.

[37] In other words, to release the force you first need to accumulate it.

Verse 2

Two fists are placed above and below
In the image of a violent beast.
The left foot takes a step west
To then be withdrawn to the east.
Guarding the area of the heart, the knuckles look inward;
The capabilities of both fists know no bounds.
If you are just going to apply the solid,
First proffer the soft to succeed.

5. *Four-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

The right thigh must be bent;
The left thigh placed forward sideways.
The left foot draws to the ground;
The torso is upright and is not.
The right fist is in front of the forehead;
The left fist is above the left knee.
The upper and lower part
Look after each other
In merging the heart with the abdomen.
Be attentive with your applications;
Quickness of wit is very individual.
When you want to be solid, be soft;
If you wish to rise, first you need to lower.
The Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*
Is completely hidden within.
Switch off the mechanism of quick wit;
He who can predict is invincible.

Posture 31

KICK WITH TOE

Ti Yi Jiao

1. Diagram of the posture

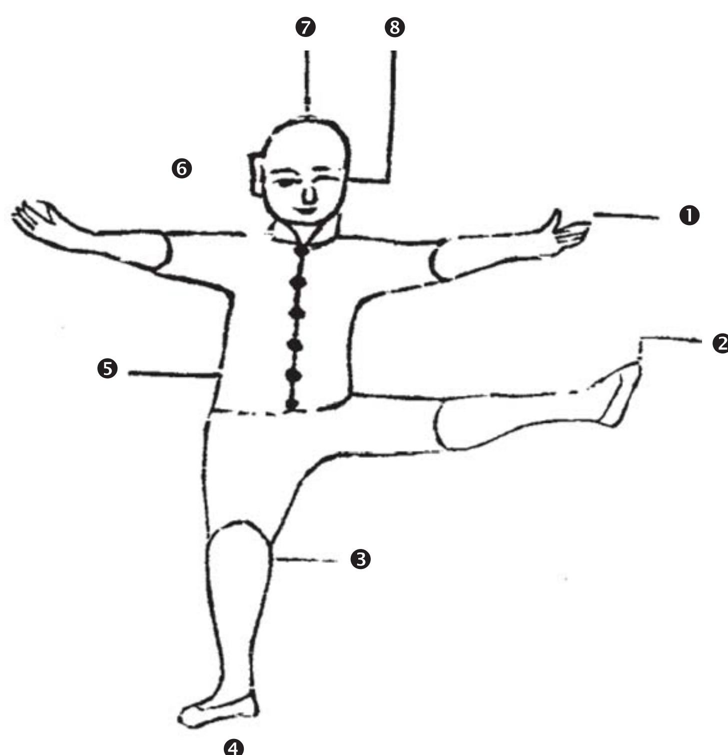


Fig. 2.31.1 Kick with Toe (Ti Yi Jiao)

Inscriptions:

❶ in the preceding *Shou Tou Shi* posture, the left fist's position above the left knee causes the left foot to kick up simultaneously with its toes; following the left hand's move upward, the left arm stretches out at shoulder level parallel to the left leg to add strength to the left kicking toes;

❷ when doing *Shou Tou Shi*, the left foot draws to the ground in an empty step and the torso faces north; now raise the left foot and kick the left toes west at the opponent's crotch;

❸ bent the right knees slightly to stand properly on one leg;

❹ flatten the right foot on the ground;

❺ Waist power (*jing* essence) flows slightly backward and down two-thirds;

❻ the right hand is at the level of the forehead it moves to the right at the same time as the left kick and the left arm's movement left-ward; hence the right arm also stretches out at shoulder level to add strength to the supporting right leg;

❼ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;

❽ look at in the direction of the left kicking toes, focusing the center of your gaze on the left foot.

Distribute energy (*jing* essence) from the top of the head to both arms. The arms use the silk-reeling method to coil energy in direct rotation, the left hand moving west while the right east, stretching sideways at shoulder level. Drop waist energy downward and slightly to the right (east) to 'sit' on the right buttock. Kick the left foot west. Hollow the chest and connect it to the right foot digging into the ground. Bend the right knee slightly to open it so that energy can flow between the upper and lower body.

陳氏太極拳圖說

2. Symbolic meaning of the posture

While the preceding *Shou Tou* posture resembles the form of an ancient cooking vessel for ceremonial worship[38], the current *Shi Ti Yi Jiao* posture resembles a single-stemmed vessel, suggesting the ability to produce good effects, that is, with left toes kicking. This image is strongly reflected by hexagrams Sun (41) above and Yi (42) below.

The power of the upper body enables the left foot to rise and kick at the opponent's crotch. This idea is embodied in hexagram Jin (35), symbol of forward movement and rapid promotion or progress. Its topmost undivided line shows a subject "advancing his horns (that is, up in arms). But he only uses them to punish the rebellious people of his own city. The position is perilous (because of the taking up of arms), but there will be good fortune in the end. Owing to his firm correctness, there will be no great mistakes. Yet however firm and correct he may be, because of the use of arms against his own men, there will be occasion for unforgettable shame," since his course of proceeding is not yet brilliant.

In the Da Zhuang (34) hexagram (which correlates with the preceding *Yan Shou Chui* posture), the image is one of great vigor and flourish, of a subject becoming strong. The lowest undivided line shows its subject manifesting strength in his toes, but whose advance leads most certainly to misfortune and exhaustion, like an old ram butting a fence and getting his horns entangled. The topmost divided line also shows one "who may be compared to a ram butting a fence and unable to retreat or advance as desired. On the other hand, proceeding ahead will bear no fruit since he has no aims nor any plans for deeds to be done. If, however, he realizes the difficulty of his position and waits patiently for the proper time, good fortune will arise," and his misfortunes will not be prolonged.

Kicking others, one paradoxically gives opponents the opportunity to grab the legs in counter-attack. When this happens, how can one act in retreat

[38] Typically a three legged cauldron.

or pursuit? Only by finding a way to remain out of harm's clutches can one obtain good fortune in the end.

By acknowledging the dangers of a situation with no headway and waiting patiently for the proper opportunity, one achieves the condition of the following Ming Yi (36) hexagram, which is associated with the left thigh. The second divided line of the hexagram shows its subject, "in the condition indicated by Ming Yi, wounded only in the left thigh. It is advantageous for him to save himself by the strength of a swift horse, and thus good fortune will come," due to his abiding with the Golden Mean and acting in a manner appropriate to the circumstances. Likewise, the image of a horse implies a strong lower body that can make effective kicks.

3. *Five-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

Lift up the left foot and kick with the toes —
The opponent doesn't expect that.
Confuse him with a kick to the crotch
And that moment will be fatal to him.

4. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

There is a wall before your eyes raised to the sky;
A blade in the air, which dikes the mouth of the vale.
If you want to fight with masters of the art, start from this —
Kick down a thousand mountains with a single foot.

Posture 32

KICK WITH HEEL

Deng Yi Gen

1. Diagram of the posture



Fig. 2.32.1 Kick with Heel (Deng Yi Gen)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the opponent clutches your left ankle with his right hand;
- ❷ the opponent's right foot flattens on the ground;
- ❸ to kick with maximum strength, don't bend your right knee;
- ❹ apply strength of the arms; don't loosen the elbow;
- ❺ drop the body to the ground to stand on both hands;
- ❻ lift your nape;
- ❼ don't make your waist and backbone flexible.

This diagram illustrates the position of the opponent's left hand when he tries to grasp your body with both hands. Being well-positioned, he first tries to hurt your left thigh by striking with his left hand. As long as he holds you by the left ankle with his right hand, he can cause fatality by using force to press down or rotate your left leg. Under these circumstances, it's a good idea to have an escape plan, though how can one predict the body's reaction at the death's door?

Once the opponent comes to kick you, retreat by taking a step back with the left foot to thwart the opponent's attack to the area between acupoint Jiu-wei in the upper abdomen and Cheng-jiang on the chin under the lower lip (including the throat).

This diagram shows the moment when the opponent grasps you by the left ankle after your attempt to kick him with the left toes. He tries to rotate your left leg to drop you to the ground, or to lift your leg up to uproot your stance. If this happens, drop your body to the ground and stand on both hands, moving the right sole to your left ankle to hit the opponent's hand and release yourself from his grasp. Alternatively, you can try kicking the opponent with your right sole or heel to any part of his body to gain critical time to re-adjust your position.

2. *Internal power (nei jing)*

When you are in the position where the opponent is grabbing your left ankle with his right hand, quickly turn around and drop your body on the ground to stand on both hands. Lift your nape to collect energy from the whole body toward the back and waist, so providing strength to the arms and shoulders. The internal power (*jing* essence) then runs through the shoulders and along the arms to help the fingers dig strongly into the ground. Don't loosen your fingers even for an instant or you will not be able to kick the right sole or right heel with the required strength, as this is wholly dependent on the fingers rooting into the ground. In fact, what you should really loosen is the navel area, the gateway of energy though which force and spirit flows in and out to provide power to the right sole.

Indeed, it does not matter if you succeed in releasing your left ankle from the opponent's grasp — success depends entirely on your ability to kick your opponent at any available part of his body with your right heel. Moreover, you need to be fast and precise, alert to any opportunities for the effective attacks, taking care to avoid reckless movements that may lead to further entrapments. To increase the effectiveness of your kick, aim at painful areas and acupoints which could be fatal for the opponent. The practitioner should be aware of these points.

3. *Diagram of the new style of Kick with Heel (Deng Yi Gen)*

This posture represents a simplified version of the aforementioned *Deng Yi Gen* form, and it is recommended that students begin their learning from this version first. Once a student overcomes her fear of difficulties, half the knowledge will become embedded in her mind/heart. So, face west when dropping the body on the ground to stand on both hands which are pointed north, then turn the head sideways to look east. Kick northward with the left foot and set it on the ground beside the right foot which is pointing east. After flattening the left foot on the ground, kick the right

heel backward and up to hit the opponent immediately in the chest area in the quickest possible move.

Focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head and coil the energy in the reverse direction by applying the silk-reeling method with both hands. Standing on both hands and one leg, distribute the body weight equally to produce a powerful back kick with the right heel. Focus your gaze on both hands and concentrate your attention on the right backward kick. The force of the whole body is concentrated on the right leg to produce maximum impact with the right heel. Once the decision to execute a kick is made, you have to knock the opponent down and defeat him.

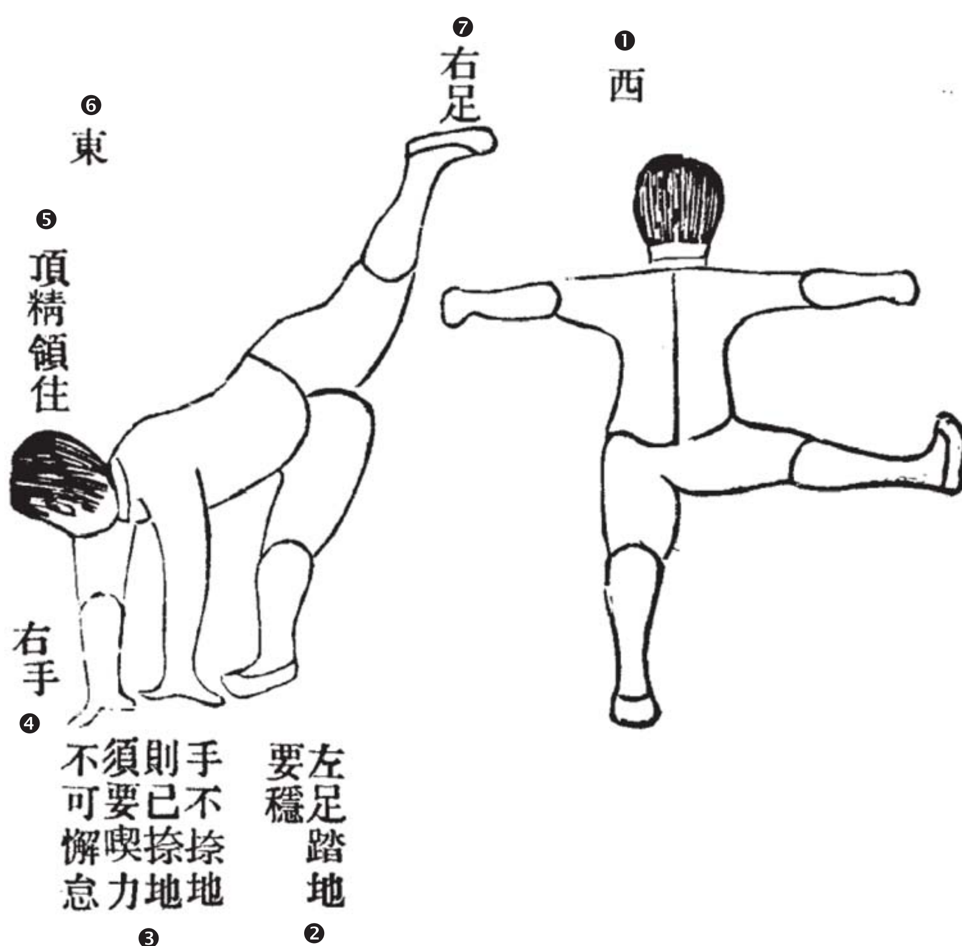


Fig. 2.32.2 Diagram of the new style of Kick with Heel (Deng Yi Gen)

Inscriptions:

❶ west;

❷ flatten the left foot beside the right one in a stable position;

❸ once you place both hands on the ground you must apply full strength to provide a firm foundation for the kick;

❹ the right hand;

❺ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;

❻ east;

❼ the right foot.

3. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

When you kicking the opponent with the left toes, you risk entrapping yourself as the opponent can grab you by the left ankle or foot. Such a situation correlates with the Kan (29) hexagram (double water), the symbol of sinking and total peril. Hence we see the subject of its lowest divided line "in double defeat yet entering the cavern within it. There will be evil." The posture is also associated with hexagram Bo (23), symbol of erosion, falling and destruction, whose subject in its fourth divided line is like "a couch whose upholstery is going to be damaged. There will indeed be evil." This means that calamity is very near at hand.

The lowest undivided line of another related hexagram, Tai (11), suggests the idea of "grass pulled up and bringing with it other stalks whose roots to which it is connected." The lowest divided line of yet another hexagram, Pi (12) suggests the same image, adding that "With firm correctness of the superior person, there will be good fortune and progress." The opponent tries to rotate your left leg with his right hand to make you be like 'the pulled up grass.'

The lowest divided line of hexagram Kun (47), symbol of repression and confinement, shows its subject "with bare buttocks sitting on the rough stump of a tree. He enters a dark valley, and for three years has no prospect

of deliverance," so blighted is he and without clear vision. This image suggests that the position of the head is facing down.

Kun's third divided line shows a subject "bound up by a threatening rock (the strong fourth line) in front and brushwood of thorns behind (the strong second line)." This correlates with the opponent grasping your left foot strongly with his right hand. The topmost divided line shows its subject completely fettered, as if bound by creepers. In such a highly dangerous position the only thing he can do is say, "If I move, I shall regret it." If, however, he regrets and repents from former errors, "there will be good fortune in his going forward," so he goes forth to achieve this. There will be no error, if his heart is as full of sincerity as a vessel brimming with wine, and it will also ultimately result in other advantages. If some tasks need to be done, there will be benefits in doing them early. Hence the topmost divided line shows that such endeavours will be successful under these circumstances.

The fourth divided line shows its subject "at a feast with only a cup of spirits and an accompanying basket of rice, and the cup and bowl only made of earthenware." All this is due to the action of the subject of the strong line above it, in the center of the trigram for water, the symbol of peril. When heaven and earth are freed from the grasp of winter, we have thunder, symbol of movement and rain. When these come, the buds of plants and trees begin to burst with fruit. This implies that the subject will find no one to disturb his exits and entrances, hence no error arises. So, whatever direction he moves will be advantageous.

4. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the Deng Yi Gen Posture

Verse 1

Kick with the left foot west and up;
Stand on both hands, applying the tiger's power.
Turn the torso round to strike the opponent's grasp away;
Initiate an upward swing and punch at his chest.

Verse 2

Again, lift up the right heel to kick to the sky,
And drop the left leg at once without deviation
Having a hard time, apply this technique;
If you know your body, release it through this.

Posture 33

Screen Hand and Punch (4th Performance)

You Shou Chui

1. *Diagram of the posture*



Fig. 2.33.1 4th performance of Screen Hand and Punch (You Shou Chui)

Inscriptions:

❶ sink the waist *jing* essence down;

❷ accumulate the whole body's *qi* energy into the right fist; to do this properly, use the strength of the right arm and right shoulder;

❸ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;

❹ look at the right fist;

Look west while the torso faces north. Move the right hand upward and forward past the front of the face; at the same time, clench the right hand into a fist to punch forward in inward rotation of the silk-reeling method, so that *jing* essence coils toward the fist.

First set the left foot on the ground, then take a step forward while the right foot turns west after taking a step; take another wide step west with the left foot then stop in a stable stance. Then set the left foot down then take a step west. As the body turns, turn the right foot west and take a step in the same direction. after kicking the right heel backward and up, put the right foot down to send force in reverse direction up along the right leg to the 21st vertebra, then further along the spine until it enters the right shoulder, finally flowing along the arm to the fist to strengthen the right punch

After kicking the right heel backward, put the left foot down and turn from east to south and then west, while stepping the right foot west, the torso facing the north. Then take another step west with the left foot and punch forward with the right fist.

The left hand is placed west to amplify the right punch with additional 'power essence'. It does this by directing a reverse coil of power (*jing* essence) westward, palm above the right forearm and back facing up. Before the punch is unleashed, the left hand parries the opponent's attack to screen the right punch with its palm.

There is no need to stretch both arms out completely, rather, it depends on the distance between you and the opponent. If the opponent is too far from you, take one, two or even three steps toward him to punch at closer reach, taking care not to close in too much as this will make the punch ineffective. The arm should always be slightly bent at the elbow to focus the whole body's strength into the fist and even further out, so as to defeat the opponent with the energy of your *gong-fu*. The quality of your *gong-fu* is determined by the strength with which you release attacking energy. Highly concentrated internal effort combined with rapid movement of the arm and fist will enable you to cover the distance between you and the op-

ponent in an instant. The left hand assists by screening the right fist and thus your intention to attack.

Before releasing your punch, put yourself at an advantage by integrating the force of your upper body, the power of your waist, the spirit of your eyes and the power-essence of your crotch into a unified whole, as previously described in the *Deng Yi Gen* form. This requires you to turn south and west while facing down, setting your left foot down and turning the heel from east to south. The right foot turns from south to west and takes a step in the same direction. The chest faces north, while the left foot takes another step west. Thus, take three steps in total.

Before you flatten the left foot on the ground, punch westward with the right fist toward the approaching opponent to hit him sideways at the left side of his torso (left ribs and left shoulder). As you punch, flatten your left foot on the ground. Clench your right hand into a fist and punch a distance of 6-7 *cun*[39] to the opponent's ribs and shoulder to strike him around the left nipple area[40].

The first rule to learn when attacking is to defend yourself simultaneously. This is achieved through improving the flow of your internal power, which depends on correct posture, that is, one which adheres to the course of the Golden Mean and where *Zhong-qi* regenerates itself effortlessly. Apply this rule of correct posture to all postures. For example: in *Deng Yi Gen*, stand on both hands and turn your head eastward; in *Er Qi Jiao*, turn your head west or kick west with your left toes, or make a wide turn around to kick your right heel up; for *Gao Tan Ma*, take a preparatory stance to attack the opponent with intrinsic force which has been accumulated through reeling and squeezing between opposite parts of the body in the image of hexagram Shi He (21), whose lowest undivided line shows a subject "whose feet are in the stocks and he is deprived of his toes." The topmost undivided line of Shi He (21) also shows its subject "wearing stocks and deprived of his ears. There will be evil." This is because he hears but does not understand,

[39] about 15-18 cm.
[40] within a radius of 12-15 cm.

and so finds no one to distress him in his exits and entrances. In seven days he will return and repeat his proper course. His returns over the course of seven positions, transforming from the state of hexagram Gou (44) to Fu (24). Thus, he will be dangerous no matter the direction in which he moves.

The second undivided line of Li (10) shows its subject "treading the path as a quiet and solitary person, to whom, if he is firm and correct, there will be good fortune." Thus, by holding the Golden Mean, that is, the central and correct position, he will not allow himself to be thrown into disorder by opponents. As Confucius said: "To avenge an old sore means never to stop killing."

2. *Internal power (nei jing)*

Zhong-qi flows from the Dan-tian up to the shoulders, then back down and outward, coiling along the right arm toward the fist. It also flows up in reverse direction from the heel, along the spine to the third vertebra, passing through the right shoulder and arm to finally reach the fist. You need to combine the strength of the right shoulder and arm with the internal power of the left hand which reels in reverse direction. The arm lifts up slightly, palm facing east. *Jing* essence of the upper body and crotch is concentrated on the punch. Both knees are connected together and the feet are flattened on the ground in a stable stance. This means that the rear right foot uses strength to support the right fist, so the right knee shouldn't be loose but connected with the internal power of the left knee.

a) Diagram of the right fist

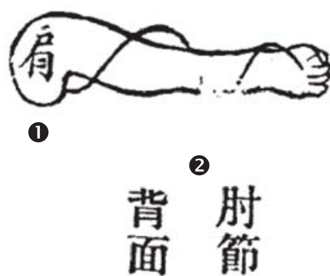


Fig. 2.33.2 Diagram of the right fist

Inscriptions:

❶ shoulder;

❷ view of elbow tip from the outside.

b) Diagram of the left hand

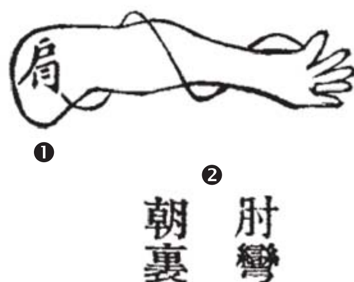


Fig. 2.33.3 Diagram of the left hand

Inscriptions:

❶ shoulder;

❷ the elbow is bent and faces inward.

c) Movements of the feet



Fig. 2.33.4 Movements of the feet

Inscriptions:

❶ the rear right foot is placed behind;

❷ the right foot is in front;

❸ the right foot is fixed on the ground;

❹ the left foot;

❺ the right foot;

❻ drop the left foot down to face west in an immovable position.

❼ set the left foot down then take a step west. Re-adjust the position of the left heel using *jing* essence flowing in reverse direction; turn the right foot in the same way and take a step west; then, using *jing* essence in reverse direction, re-adjust the position of the right foot to the west and take another wide step west.

3. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The preceding five postures are all allocated to hexagram Kan (29), which comprises of two repeated water trigrams, signifying one dangerous wrong-doing after another. Therefore *Kan* symbolizes total peril for all under heaven, as reflected by the subject of its third divided line:

> *"Whether he comes or goes, descends or ascends, he is confronted by a wrong-doing. All is peril and unrest to him. His endeavors will lead him to the bottom of the pit. There should be no deliverance for such a hopeless case."*

Thus, the subject will never achieve success under such circumstances.

Another saying also states: "No plain, no slopes; no going forth, no coming back." Hence hexagram Pi (12) is actually the expression of Tai (11) to the farther extreme, that is, when Pi (12) reaches its peak, it starts to turn into Tai (11). In hexagram Jin (35), symbol of forwardness and quick promotions, the lowest divided line shows its subject "wishing to advance but at the same time keeping back, apprehensive of being defeated," since he pursues his proper course all alone.

So, the explanation for the entire hexagram states that: "Chin denotes advancing and quick promotion. And the weak (fourth) line of the transformable Guan (20) advances, moving above to the position of the fifth line in the present Jin (35)." This means that the right foot follows closely behind to provide the right fist with additional strength. The topmost undivided line shows its subject "advancing his horns, that is, being up in arms. But he only uses them to punish the rebellious people of his own city. The position is perilous (because of the taking up arms) but there will be good fortune in the end."

In Xiao-xu (9), symbol of minor restraint and obstruction, we see "dense clouds, but no rain coming from our borders in the west." Here, "dense clouds but no rain" indicates the continual forward movement of the strong lines. "Commencing at our western border" suggests that benevolent will

has not yet been widely displayed. The lowest undivided line shows its subject "returning and pursuing his own path. Thus, what mistake could he fall into? There will be good fortune indeed."

4. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the 4th performance of Yan Shou Chui

Verse 1

The forth performance of *Yan Shou Chui*
Is done with the torso facing the west;
Go into peril and come out of it
To twist the opponent around.
The right fist must use the strength of the arm
To punch as strong as a horse's kick.

Verse 2

Put the left foot down and take a step west
To repeat the step with the right foot;
Then another left step follows in that direction
To see the empty fist filled with tremendous strength.

Posture 34

SMALL CATCH AND PUSH

Xiao Qin Na

1. Diagram of the posture



Fig. 2.34.1 Small Catch and Push (Xiao Qin Na)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ look at the opponent's chest, pushing it with your right hand;
- ❷ the left hand;
- ❸ the right hand;
- ❹ both knees are 'tied' together with supporting *jing* essence;
- ❺ without pausing, take a wide step west with the left foot after the right foot's small step forward; the flow of *jing* essence throughout the body makes the body rounded and agile, able to produce nimble turns to the left and right without tension or visible effort;

6. following the upper body's position, the right foot takes a small step forward (about 15 cm) before digging firmly into the ground;
7. sink *jing* essence of the waist downward; if the waist lacks strength, there will be no strength in the whole body;
8. the right arm's strength must be gathered in the right hand;
9. control the situation behind the body with your ears;
10. boxing requires that *jing* essence be always focused at the top of the head to guide the whole body's force and spirit.

From nape to hipbone, the back must be agile. To maintain control on the situation behind the body, you should make your back extremely sensitive to all adversarial activities behind you. Don't let the opponent catch you unawares. If he tries to punch you, ward off his hand with your left hand, using direct rotation of *jing* essence to avert it sideways, that is, leftward. Then using your right palm with fingers pointing down, push his lower chest at acupoint Jiu-wei. Your right arm draws a circle to accumulate power in the right hand. With this technique you will be able to knock the opponent down.

If the preceding *Yan Shou Chui* posture or some other punch results in hitting the opponent in a painful area or acupoint, or if fighting begins anew, perhaps with more opponents in attack, you should put an safe distance between you and the aggressor(s) until the opportunity to close-in quickly to your opponent arises, so you can deflect his arm with your left hand and push his chest with your right palm. These moves are known as small fighting maneuvers, where the upper body is defended by the left hand while the right palm pushes on the opponent's chest area. To perform this technique you don't need to apply a wide motion of the body, hence its name, 'Small Catch and Push'.

2. *Internal power (nei jing)*

Draw the opponent's arm leftward with your left hand by applying *jing* essence in direct movement, or evade the opponent's attack by moving from north to south. At the same time, advance forward with the left hand positioned above, the right hand circling below to generate *jing* essence flow from south to north, then forward to push at the opponent's chest. This technique is also called 'Hidden Under Elbow Push'.

a) Diagram of the right palm's forward push

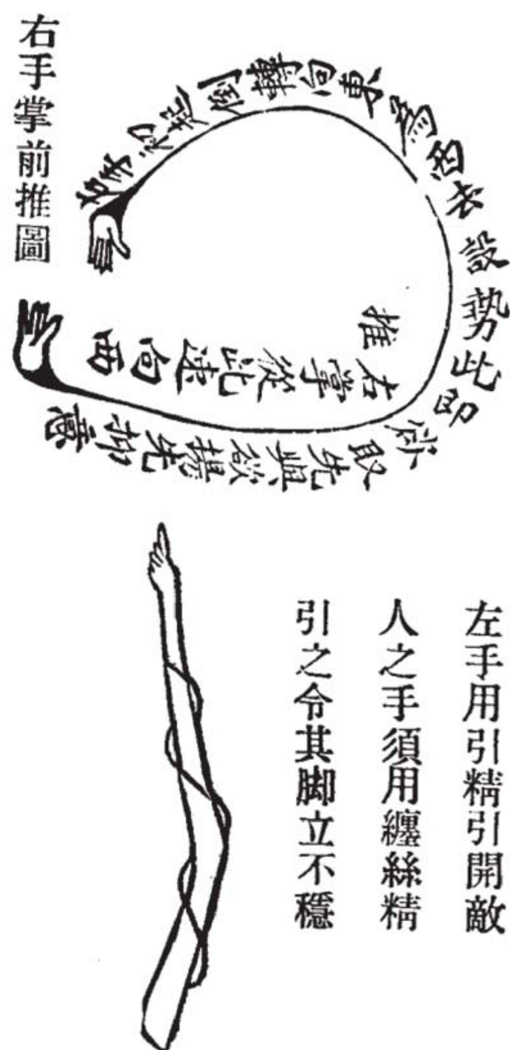


Fig. 2.34.2 Diagram of the right palm's forward push

Inscription to the top figure:

- From this place the right palm moves quickly westward to push forward. The right hand draws a circle up and backward (east), then downward to return west and push forward in the final movement, in accordance with the concept which states that, "If you want to rise, you need to lower first."

Inscriptions to the middle figure:

- The left hand applies power to produce a technique which attracts and draws the opponent's arm to the side. As a result of the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration, the opponent gets drawn into defeat and loses the stability of his stance.

B) Diagram of the feet movement during right palm's forward push

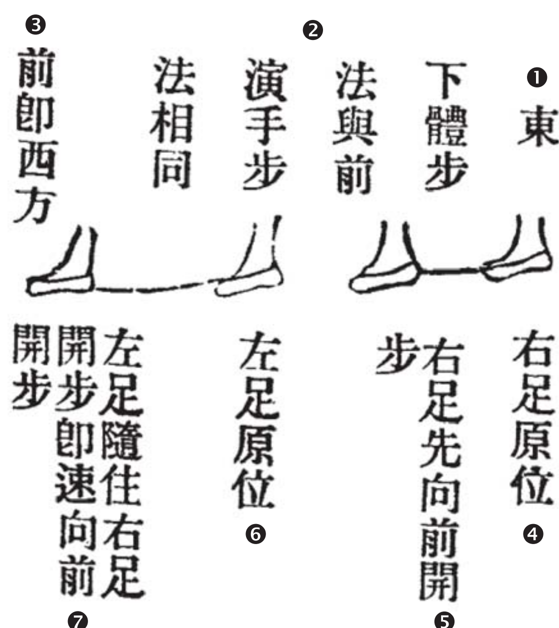


Fig. 2.34.3 Diagram of the feet movement during right palm's forward push

Inscriptions:

❶ east;

❷ the technique of footwork here is similar to that in the *Yan Shou Chui* posture;

❸ to take a step forward means to step westward;
❹ the initial position of the right foot;
❺ take a step forward with the right foot;
❻ the initial position of the left foot;
❼ after the right step forward, the left foot takes a quick step in the same direction.

3. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

This posture resembles Ma Wu[41] who traps Su Mao[42] into emptiness and takes him prisoner after performing some forms and techniques. Ruling by force, a tyrant does not wish for superior forces but strives for superiority in *gong-fu* to gain victory, as illustrated in the *Yan Shou Chui* posture. To be ruthless like Chief Cang who secretly killed Peng Chong[43] means to lower oneself to doing a tricky technique like *Xiao Qin Na*, in the same way as Qing Yu of Chu[44] used a hidden technique to defeat Zhang Han in each of their nine battles; or like Hong Gou[45], who after establishing the Han state, wanted to vanquish Xiang Yu by hounding him to death.

The actions of Wu Jiang[46] are reflected in the lowest divided line of hexagram Jin (35), the symbol of forwardness and quick promotion, whose subject is seen as "wishing to advance, and at the same time keeping back, apprehensive of being defeated." In other words, Wu Jiang appears to be wishing to advance, but at the same time he holds back due to his anxiety of being defeated, since he pursues his proper course all alone. The second divided line of Jin (35) shows its subject "with the appearance of advancing (promotion), and yet being sorrowful." If he is firm and correct, there

[41] A great knight who lived during the Warring States period (403–221 BC).
[42] A tyrant who lived during the Warring States period (403–221 BC).
[43] A tyrant who lived during the Warring States period (403–221 BC).
[44] King of the state of Chu who lived during the Warring States period (403–221 BC).
[45] A duke who lived during the Han period (202 BC – 221 AD).
[46] A historical personage.

will be good fortune, since *Zhong-qi* is upright and solid. He will receive great blessings and favors from his grandmother, Wang Mu, the sovereign-mistress, who is represented by the divided fifth line and is a symbol of returning victory. Wang Mu, dwells on the west side of the celestial lake, so all preceding postures are oriented to the west.

The topmost undivided line shows its subject "advancing his horns up in arms", referring to the right palm. But he only uses them to punish the rebellious people of his city. The position is perilous because arms have been taken up, but there will be good fortune in the end. Owing to his firm correctness there will be no great mistakes.

Similar to the condition reflected by hexagram Ming Yi (36), the aim of the subject of hexagram Jin (35) is represented by the hunting and the taking of the head of the great chief of darkness, who is the subject of the divided topmost line. Although this great feat is achieved without delay, the subject should not be eager to make all corrections at once.

The third divided line of Kui (38) shows a subject whose carriage is impeded and drawn back as the oxen are unable to pass through obstacles, represented by the strong fourth line. The driver scratches his forehead, utters profanities and becomes so filled with rage he even cuts off his nose. Hence although there isn't a good beginning, there will be a good ending, since to meet one's end without a nose is still much better than without a head.

The third undivided line of hexagram Sheng (46), symbol of rising and advancing, shows its subject ascending, as if entering unhesitatingly and confidently into an empty city.

The topmost undivided line of hexagram Jia-ren (37) shows its subject possessing sincerity, that is, mutual love, and maintaining strict discipline. Hence there will be good fortune in the end.

The lowest undivided line of hexagram Kui (38) shows that all occasions for repentance or regret will disappear. Though the subject of the line has

lost his horse, let him not seek for it as it will return by itself. Should he meet a bad person, he will not err in communicating with him.

The topmost divided line of hexagram Jian (39) shows its subject going forward, only to experience increased difficulties, while his return as the subject of the line beneath will be productive and of great merit.

All these images are associated with the *Xiao Qin Na* posture.

4. *Six-character a line verse dedicated to the Xiao Qin Na posture*

The preceding *Yan Shou Chui* is the most successful,
While this posture is very complex to win.
Heart, hands, eyes and feet — all act together in one go,
And the opponent is simply destined to be defeated by you.

5. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the Xiao Qin Na posture*

Heel of the rear right leg moves a step forward;
Then the left foot takes another step forth.
The left hand raises to block,
While the right palm pushes hard directly to the chest.
Slap the opponent's belly with your palm — extremely painful indeed;
Make a hidden push covered by the left elbow.
Even immortals cannot protect themselves from this,
When *Haoran Qi* energy culminates in the mainstream.

6. *Five-character a line verse dedicated to the Xiao Qin Na posture*

The west is allocated to metal, and the numbers Geng (7) and Xin (8);
All myriad things are harvested in the autumn period.
This is what the *Xiao Qin Na* technique is for —
Now you cannot call it complicated.

7. Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the Xiao Qin Na posture

Some time before attacks were east,
Then west and now west again,
In which the complicated meets with the simple.
From now on you begin to understand
What the true *Taiji* push really is.

Posture 35

GRASP HEAD AND PUSH MOUNTAIN

Bao Tou Tui Shan

By the term 'head', we mean that all parts of the head, including the cheeks, jaws, tongue, ears and eyes. All these must be integrated with the shoulders, elbows, torso and longitudinal muscles along the spine above the heart as a whole.

Push forward with both hands, keeping the fingers together and emitting energy of the whole body as one tightly bound knot. Draw both elbows sideways to connect the *jing* essence of both arms with the big toe of the supporting left foot. Drop both shoulders downward using strength.

1. Diagram of the posture

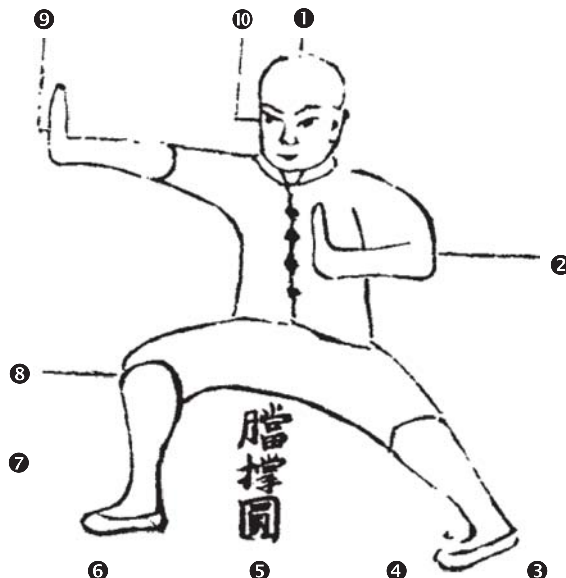


Fig. 2.35.1 Grasp Head and Push Mountain (Bao Tou Tui Shan)

Inscriptions:

❶ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head to guide the internal power of the whole body;

❷ once you unite the whole body under the stewardship of the heart, you will start to feel that your heart is now contained in the upper back and shoulders;

❸ stretch the rear left leg like a string — don't loosen it up at all;

❹ dig the big toe and heel of your rear left foot into the ground, feeling and experiencing the external pressure on your body;

❺ round-in and open the crotch;

❻ connect the energy of right buttock and the right knee together;

❼ press the right shin down, feeling and experiencing the external pressure on your body;

❽ put your right knee forward;

❾ bring energy to the right palm and integrate it with the force of the right calf, feeling and experiencing the external pressure on your body;

❿ feel and experience the pressure on your jaws and tongue; press your tongue lightly on the hard palate, look at the right hand in front.

Facing west, produce a block and turn around suddenly to face the opponent so as to avert a rear attack. Immediately after turning abruptly, raise the arms up and spread the elbows sideways to push the opponent at the chest with both hands before he attempts to attack you. Stretch your rear left leg and stand solidly as if setting your hands against a mountain. Then bend the left knee suddenly and stamp the left leg forcefully on the ground. Meanwhile, gather *jing* essence in the upper body, sink your waist energy down and round-in the crotch. When stamping the left sole on the ground, let the impulse emitted propel the energy of the whole body along the arm toward the palms. Then push forward with both hands, swiftly releasing the force of the whole body through the palms to cause the opponent to fall back in retreat.

2. Internal power (nei jing)

Both arms and legs apply the silk-reeling method of rotating energy from outside in while the body's forces are concentrated in the forward push. Try to draw as near to your opponent as possible to obtain a maximum push. If the distance between you and the opponent is too far and does not allow for suitable attack, skip forward as fast as possible, separating both arms at hip level then moving them up to rotate inward, passing them between the opponent's arms and land your hands on his chest in a powerful push. You must push with great swiftness to avert any skillful deflections at last moment.

a) Movement of the internal force in the arms

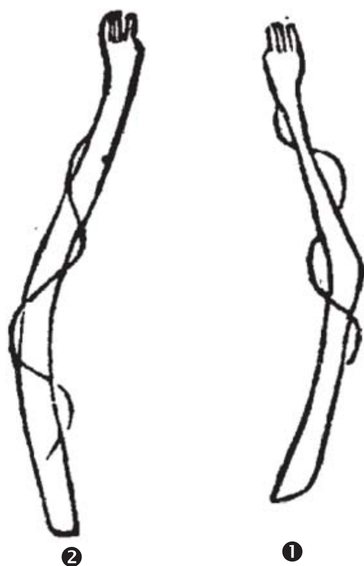


Fig. 2.35.2 Movements of internal force in the arms

Inscriptions:

❶ diagram of the left arm rotating energy generated by the silk-reeling method;

❷ diagram of the right arm rotating energy generated by the silk-reeling method.

b) Movement of the internal force in the arms and legs



Fig. 2.35.3 Movements of internal force in the legs

Inscriptions:

❶ diagram of the left leg rotating energy generated by the silk-reeling method;

❷ diagram of the right leg rotating energy generated by the silk-reeling method.

b) Movements of the hands and feet



Fig. 2.35.4 Movements of hands and feet

Inscriptions:

- ❶ move the right hand up, rotating from outside in;
- ❷ move the left hand up, rotating from outside in;
- ❸ the right foot;
- ❹ diagram of the forward step of the right foot.

The preceding *Xiao Qin Na* posture implies the left foot points west. In the current *Bao Tou Tui Shan* posture, the torso has already turned to the east with the left foot placed behind. In contrast with the front right foot, the left one doesn't need to leave its initial position, only needing to re-adjust its heel position. Withdraw the left foot and place it behind the right, then take a step forward (east) with the right foot. The size of this step must be suitable for swift and strong pushing, but shouldn't be wider than 1 *chi*[47].

[47] 30 cm.

3. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The preceding *Xaio Qin Na* posture is oriented west, while the current *Bao Tou Tui Shan* posture produces a quick turn east to avert attacks from the rear. Thus you need to be very sensitive to any changes in your surroundings from all sides to be able to react adequately and promptly.

So, turn around to push the opponent with both hands using the advanced technique. Your senses must be extremely alert and keen, like the heightened feelings shared between two young people in love. This is why the posture is allocated to hexagram Xian (31), symbol of marriage and exerting influence. As explanation for the entire hexagram says, "Xian is used here in the sense of feelings, meaning feelings which are mutually influencing." Those who insist on forcing their influence on me despite my protests, I gently let them go; those who do not wish to retreat freely I push away, as if leaning my hands against a mountain. Hence it is said, "Feel and experience the influence with your big toe. Feel and experience the influence with the shin of your leg. Feel and experience the influence with your thigh. Feel and experience the influence with the flesh along the spine above the heart. All five sensitive organs and a hundred bodily structures are involved in the process. Since the strength of the arms is not enough to repulse a rear attack nor strike the aggressor down, use the whole body's energy and forces to succeed in overpowering him.

The explanation goes on to say, "There are two influences moving and responding to each other, thereby forming a matrimonial union: the repression of one and the satisfaction of the other in their relative positions." All these things convey the union of a free and successful course and the fulfillment of the conditions, while any advantage will depend on being firm and correct. Heaven and earth exert their influences, thereby ensuring the transformation and production of all things.

We see the same processes in boxing as well: if we look at the method and impact of a true boxer's influence , we can also see his opponents, the true character of heaven and earth and all things. With firmness and cor-

rectness, all under heaven can be successful. Furthermore, by moving in a manner true to oneself, one can never fail to remove obstacles on the path. Indeed, 'to push obstacles away' does not mean to defeat others but to protect oneself from defeat. Hence the force and spirit of the whole body are gathered in both hands to produce an irrevocably powerful push.

4. Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the Bao Tou Tui Shan posture

Verse 1

Venerable Master from the peak of Penglai isle
Is the supernatural being who appears behind you.
With all your might try to surprise the person
And push him with both hands like a huge billow.

Verse 2

Pushing a mountain, why do you need to grasp the head?
To threaten the opponent with a split on his head.
Turn round, followed by grasping the head in a swift move
To push him over, like a tsunami swallowing a continent.

Verse 3

Place both palms against his chest as if leaning on a mountain;
Defeat him in advanced counter-attack without any regret.
Your body has the strength, which you must unite into one push,
Still keeping your eyes open at the back (and continuing on to *Dan Bian*).

Posture 36

single whip (4th performance)

Dan Bian

1. General Description

The preceding *Bao Tou Tui Shan* posture indicates that the opponent comes from the east and must be pushed over. Meanwhile, if someone attacks you from behind (west), spread out both arms to apply the silk-reeling method, coiling energy inward then outward to stretch out the left arm separately to the west.

2. Diagram of the posture

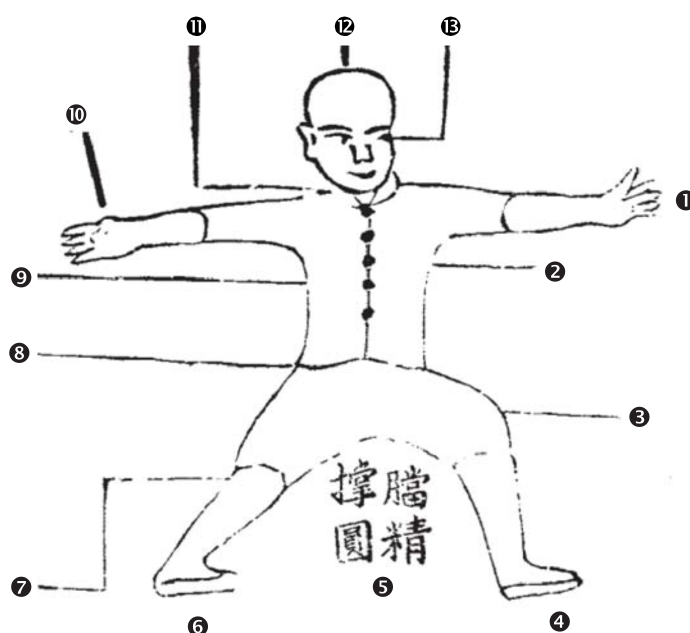


Fig. 2.36.1 4th performance of Single Whip (Dan Bian)

Inscriptions:

❶ the left hand;

❷ empty the chest to fill it with energy (*jing* essence);

❸ bend the left knee;

❹ draw the left foot to the ground beside the right foot by reeling energy in the reverse direction; after connecting with the right foot, reel energy in direct rotation and step the left foot west;

❺ round-in and open the crotch for energy to flow through;

❻ leave the right foot flattened at its initial position east, then turn the heel to point the toes northwest;

❼ bend the right knee but don't loosen it too much;

❽ sink waist energy downward;

❾ keep the torso and backbone upright to get a direct connection with *jing* essence focused at the top of the head;

❿ according to the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration, the right arm coils energy from outside in in reverse rotation from the armpit to the fingertips to connect with the left hand;

⓫ keep both shoulders perfectly relaxed and dropped down; never lift your shoulders;

⓬ focus energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;

⓭ look at the middle fingertip of the left hand.

As mentioned earlier, you need to empty your mind/heart to make all four extremities agile. Empty your Dan-tian and sink the waist energy down to the soles. Once you feel and experience all these three parts, the four limbs will be empty. To make these parts truly empty, you need to solidify energy at the top of the head so that you can concentrate and guide the force and spirit of the whole body. While reeling energy in reverse rotation through the body, stretch the right arm to the right and coil its energy in the opposite direction, that is, in direct rotation. Try to connect the reverse energy rotation of the rest of the body with the right arm and spirit.

To create a connection between the legs you also need to coil energy in reverse rotation, starting from the feet and rising up along the calves toward the thighs. Keep the right foot immovable while stepping the left foot west to reel energy rising outward from the heel. Use strength to press the left toes and calf down.

3. *Diagram of the reeling method in direct and reverse rotations*

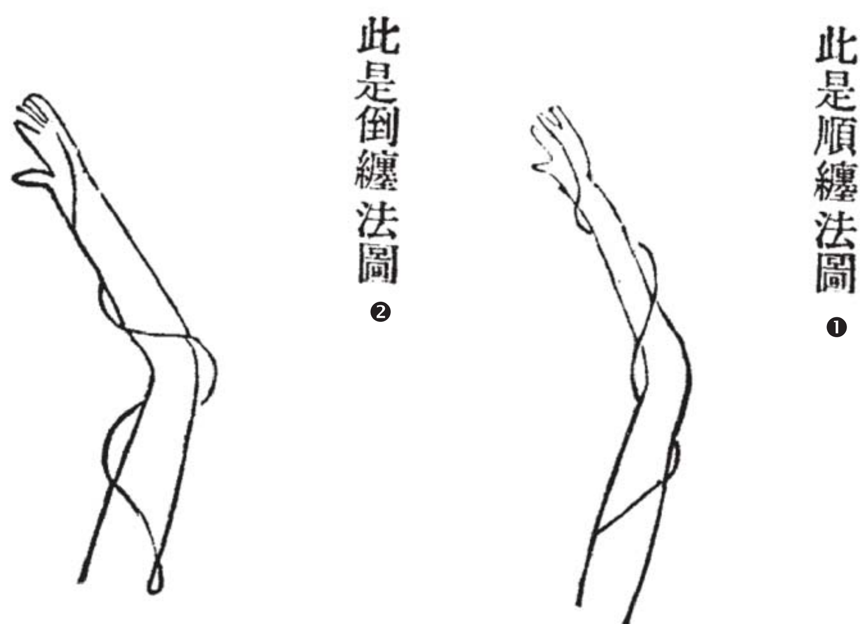


Fig. 2.36.2 Diagram of the reeling method in direct and reverse rotations

Inscriptions:

❶ Diagram of the reeling method in direct rotation;

❷ Diagram of the reeling method in reverse rotation.

4. Diagram of the energy reeling method in direct rotation

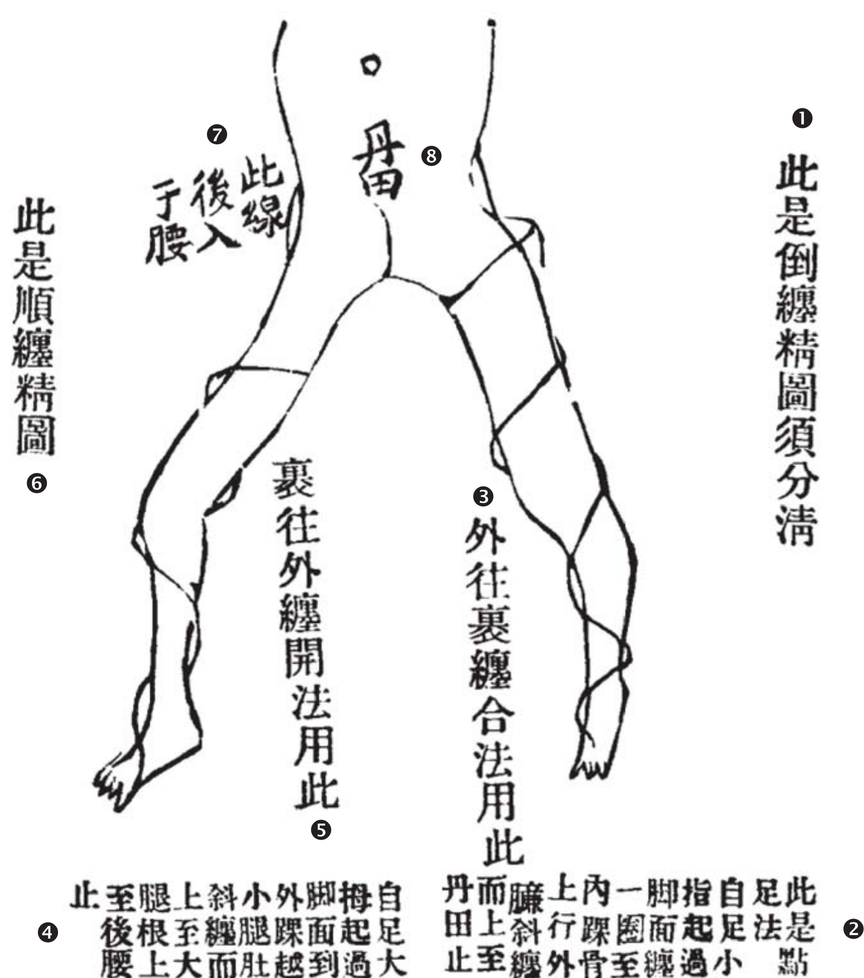


Fig. 2.36.3 Diagram of the reeling method in direct and reverse rotations

Inscriptions:

❶ this diagram shows the energy reeling method in reverse rotation, which you should distinguish clearly;

❷ this is the position of the rear foot in which energy coils up from the small toe, passes through the sole and along the inside of the ankle,

then rises up the outside of the thigh, continuing upward until it stops at the Dan-tian;

❸ the method of energy coiling from outside in closing, that is, accumulating energy;

❹ this is the position of the front foot in which energy coils up from the big toe, passes through the sole and along the outside of the ankle, then rises up the inside of the crotch, continuing upward until it stops at the small of the back;

❺ the method of energy coiling from inside out in opening, that is, releasing energy;

❻ diagram of the energy reeling method in direct rotation;

❼ the coiled thread entering the waist from behind;

❽ Dan-tian.

5. Diagram of the left hand spreading out through energy moving in direct rotation

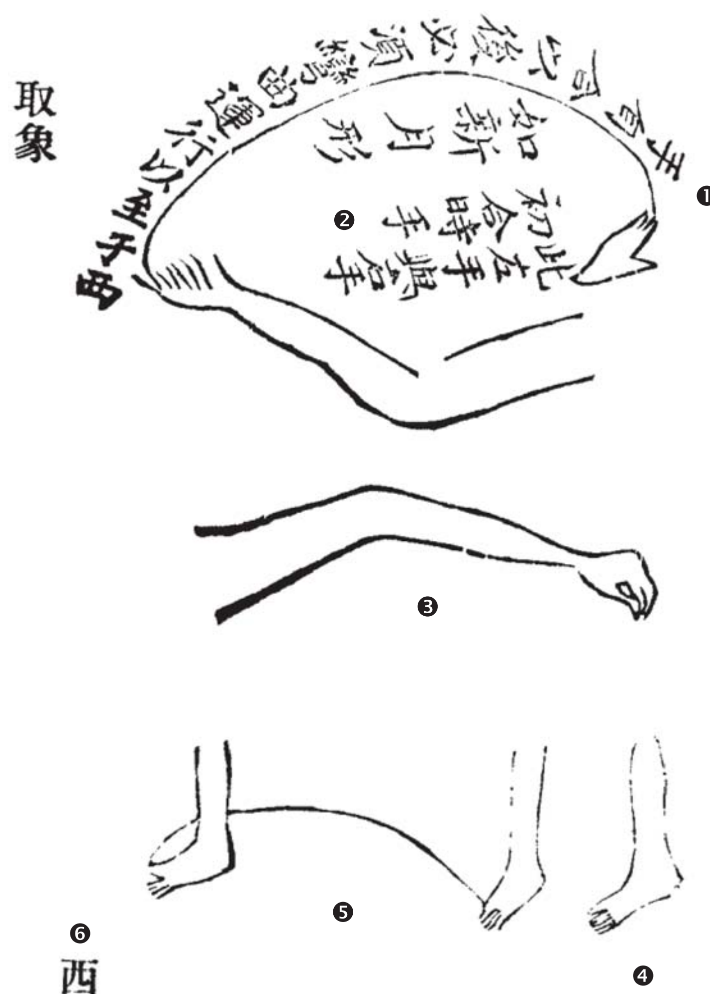


FIG. 2.36.4 LEFT HAND SPREADING OUT THROUGH ENERGY MOVING IN DIRECT ROTATION

Inscriptions to the top figure:

❶ the left hand moves west in a curve like a new moon;

❷ this is the initial position of both hands closing.

Inscription to the middle figure:

- ❸ this diagram shows the position of the right hand at the east; it should be placed behind the back to maintain energy rotation in that position.

Inscriptions to the bottom figure:

- ❹ the right foot remains immovable;
- ❺ first, the left foot draws to the ground beside the right foot, then it takes a step west in the likeness of the curve of a new moon; don't stretch the left leg completely during this footwork;
- ❻ west.

6. Symbolic meaning of the posture

The preceding posture is oriented east, or more precisely, you face east but your torso is turned north. This kind of 'semi-facing' orientation has already been discussed earlier, but since the names of all *Taiji* postures are associated with the hexagrams and symbolic imagery of the Book of Changes, we can now trace the development of this posture within the framework of the first part of the Book, starting from *Qian* and *Kun* and finishing with the *Kan* and *Li* figures.

Traditionally, due to the their centralized positions, both *Qian* and *Kun* correlate with *Zhong-qi* in their never-ending interaction with each other. *Kan* and *Li*, on the other hand, are found at the end of the first part of the Book of Changes, hence coinciding with the fourth performance of *Dan Bian*, the thirty-sixth form. Thus we can treat *Kan* and *Li* as symbolizing the end of a cycle, though keeping in mind that the mechanism of *qi* doesn't stop at all.

As the hexagram conventionally marking the end of the first part of the Book of Changes, Li (30) consists of double fire trigrams, characterized by an empty central line and a solid topmost line corresponding to arms,

as well as a solid lowest line corresponding to legs. Its empty middle line is associated with the mind/heart, whose brightness is represented by the double fire trigram above and below. The brightness of an empty mind/heart coincides with the sun and moon, which alternate with each other eternally in the sky. When the mind/heart is empty, so too is the whole body. An empty body signifies agility, which allows you to react properly to an opponent's attack. This is why the image of the posture is related to hexagram *Li*.

Hexagram Kan (29), on the other hand, comprises of double water trigrams. Its topmost divided line corresponds to both arms spread out sideways, while the bottom divided line corresponds to both legs standing wide apart in a bow step. The strong or undivided middle line symbolizes *Zhong-qi*, located in the heart and kidneys and circulating between acupoints Bai-hui and Hui-yin. To maintain a robust structure and solid *qi* circulation, you first need to gather or close the energy within you, only releasing or opening it to remove obstacles in your path. Hence this posture is associated with Kan (29).

When considering the initial *Dan Bian* performance, bear in mind that *Zhong-qi* should be flowing in the image of hexagram Kan. When performing *Dan Bian*, empty your mind/heart, as though there is nothing to be reflected in it. This means that trigram *Kan* (water) interacts with trigram *Li* (fire), as manifested in the *Dan Bian* form. Once calmness is consciously restored in your body and *qi* energy balanced, harmonized *Zhong-qi* will flow back to the Dan-tian, allowing *Li* to interact with *Kan*, which in turn will result in the union of *Qian* and *Kun* over again. Returning to the condition of *Taiji* means a return to the *yin-yang* of *Yuan-qi*. Since heart is allocated to fire while kidneys to water, the interchange of *Li* and *Kan* implies a connection between the heart and kidneys. So, a return to *Qian* and *Kun* indicates a return to the *Yuan-qi* of *Taiji*, as the embodiment of your nature as a whole. Thus, *Yuan-qi* refers to the *qi* of *yin-yang* and the Five Phases. As the saying goes:

> *"Qian is strong and healthy, while Kun is weak and empty. Yin and yang face each other in interaction without any deflection. Thus, in the image of the mid-point between Kan and Li, we get the central place called 'mastery' created as a result of the interaction between water and fire. Now that we have attained the true place of Kan-Li, it can be recognized only from the outside, never from within. Being within, how can you know that Kan corresponds to the second son, while Li to the second daughter? The second son and the second daughter are allocated to the small forms of Qian and Kun. The human body is managed according to the yin-and-yang doctrine, as qi is placed between heaven and earth and represents the true qi or Zheng-qi of Qian and Kun. Therefore the true qi of Qian and Kun is actually your body represented by the Yuan-qi of the Taiji motif. Initially, your body is bestowed with Yuan-qi, whose movement makes the body bend and stretch, come and go, move across and downward, open and close, empty and solid and so on."*

Hence the current *Dan Bian* posture is allocated to trigrams *Kan* and *Li*, which actually correlate with *Qian* and *Kun* respectively. As such, it can be represented as the *Taiji* form, and hence also as a form of *Wuji*. This is, in fact, only a question of semantics, as far as the symbolic meaning of *Dan Bian* is concerned.

7. Five Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the 4th Performance of Single Whip

Verse 1

> The fourth *Dan Bian* is performed in the image of *Kan* and *Li*,
> And there is nothing in between that is not distinctive.
> The *Bao Tou Tui Shan* form makes a push eastward;
> Now turn west to attack appropriately.

Verse 2

Grasp the head with both hands to push east;
If there is someone who chases you from the west,
Turn your head and produce the posture
Before it's too late. Under the circumstances
Using *Dan Bian* is the most appropriate gesture.

Verse 3

The left foot is unhurried moving west,
As the previous push east has intensified the strength.
Coming from the west the opponent runs into trouble himself;
Turn round and apply Single Whip to strike him down.

Verse 4

All of a sudden you hear with the left ear
That someone strong and staunch
Approaches you from the west.
Does he know about *Yuan-qi* of *Taiji*,
Which you put in the Single Whip to act?
If this were so, would he dare attack?

Verse 5

To feint to the east and attack to the west —
This maneuver is well known due to its potency.
This technique is pretty good for use in everyday life;
Who knows that the true push is made toward the east?
Turn your head west and thrash with the Single Whip!

End of Volume Two

VOLUME THREE:

POSTURES 37-66

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Posture 37

ROLL FOWARD

Qian Zhao

1. *Diagram of the posture*

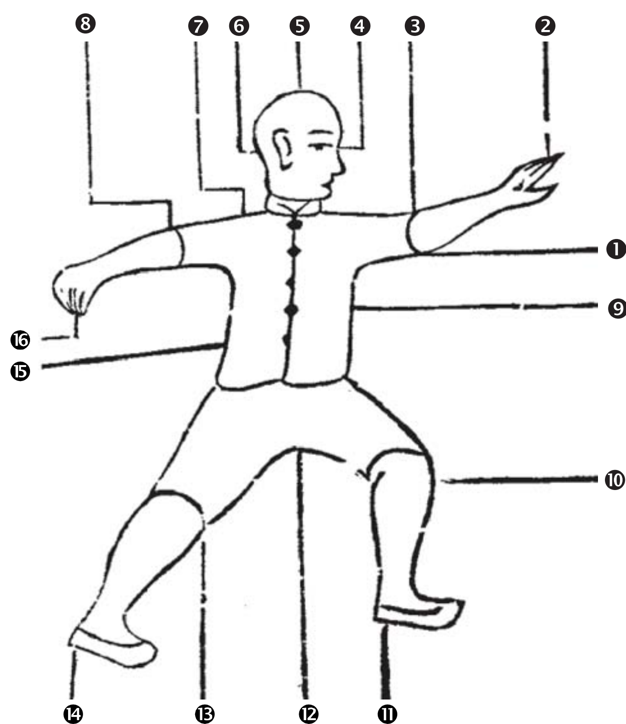


Fig. 3.37.1 Roll Forward (Qian Zhao)

Inscriptions:

❶ hang the left elbow down;

❷ the five fingertips are stuck together at the middle and lower knuckles;

❸ bend the left elbow slightly about 3-4 cm;

❹ look at the middle finger of the left hand;

❺ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head to guide the whole body force;

❻ listen to your surroundings to avoid unexpected attacks from behind;

❼ relax the shoulders in the area of acupoints Jian-jing and Fu-tu;
❽ the right elbow tip faces up;
❾ hollow the chest, leaning slightly forward in closing;
❿ bend the left knee about 1-2 cm;
⓫ set the empty left foot on the ground;
⓬ round-in the crotch;
⓭ bend the right knee;
⓮ flatten the right foot on the ground;
⓯ sink down the torso, waist and crotch in one movement;
⓰ form a right hook hand gesture by gathering the five fingertips together and turning them downward from the wrist.

2. *General description*

The *Qian Zhao* posture requires you to look straight ahead and also at your left hand as it threads its way forward toward the opponent coming from the west. As a result, you are able to avert his punch with your left hand, drawing his arm up and north, then southward in a small circle with the back of your hand and the outside of your forearm. This parry specially requires quick observation and adequate reaction, otherwise you will definitely find yourself losing control to the opponent.

When the leading left hand moves forward, sink the waist and crotch down so that when the upper body turns smoothly, the lower body will not be sluggish. Bend the right knee and withdraw the left foot so that it takes an empty and naturally correct position in front, allowing the right hook hand behind the body to settle in comfortably, while the leading left hand moves south to north in a small circle. Move the left and right hands simultaneously: the left hand rotates inward to the north while the right hand rotates outward to the south. Overall, the upper and lower body must be integrated into a whole to move as a unit with a single effort.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

The diagrams depicted on this page show the final movements of the *Qian Zhao* posture, including the method of footwork, and the above-mentioned rotation of the hands which produces a reeling effect. The way that *Zhong-qi* rises and descends determines the whole *Taiji* form, which has to be performed naturally according to the doctrine of opening and closing.

a) Diagram of the left hand drawing westward in direct rotation



Fig. 3.37.2 Diagram of the left hand drawing westward in direct rotation

Inscriptions:

- ❶ north;
- ❷ move the left hand up, then from north to south in direct rotation; move the left hand until it stops at this point;
- ❸ start to move the left hand from this location;
- ❹ south.

b) Diagram of the right hand drawing eastward in reverse rotation



Fig. 3.37.3 Diagram of the right hand drawing eastward in reverse rotation

Inscriptions:

- ❶ north;
- ❷ move the right hand in reverse rotation from south to north; the back of the hand faces north; then turn the right hand southward again;
- ❸ start to draw the right hand in a small circle from this location;
- ❹ move the right hand until it draws a small circle and stops at this point;
- ❺ south;
- ❻ the right hand follows the left hand and draws a circle in direct rotation, while the left hand rotates in reverse.

陳氏太極拳圖說

The two diagrams above depict the circular movement of both hands. Boxing techniques are built entirely on applying the mind/heart, which induces the hands to move upward in circles. In fact, before you move your hands, you should draw a pattern of this movement in your mind/heart. To determine the position of your hand, look at it first to see if its position reflects your mental pattern, that is, the intention in your mind/heart. The three organs — hands, eyes and mind/heart — should dictate the whole body's stance. If one of these elements are short, you will not be ready to meet the opponent's attacks.

You can define each detail of your opponent's stance with respect to your own position by looking at her hands. Your advances and retreats are completely reliant on your eyes, which are in fact the outward representation of your mind/heart. Your eyes enable you to discern the level of your body's readiness to execute the orders of the mind/heart according to your mental state. Once the internal mechanism of the mind/heart is activated, all four limbs will start to move nimbly to carry out its orders precisely. Hence when you look at the position of your opponent hands, you can determine her internal condition, her thoughts and her state of mind.

c) Diagram of the left hand reeling in direct rotation



Fig. 3.37.4 Diagram of the left hand reeling in direct rotation

Inscription:

- Raise the left hand and draw a circle with the fingers to reel energy rising from the thighs along the forearm toward the hands. The power of the legs cannot be accurately defined until it is demonstrated through the movement of hands.

陳鑫

d) Diagram of the right hand drawing in reverse rotation



Fig. 3.37.5 Diagram of the right hand drawing in reverse rotation

Inscriptions:

- The left hand plays the leading role in the *Qian Zhao* posture, so focus your eyes on it to concentrate the power of the whole body into it. Draw the left hand eastward with the back of the hand facing up and adhering against the inside of the opponent's arm. Your right hand guards your back in readiness for a rear attack.

The *Qian Zhao* posture follows Single Whip, hence inheriting the latter's stance and position of the arms, which are spread out sideways to guard against opponents from the east and west. So, since the arms are already spread out, you do not need to spread them further, but just slightly bend the elbows and raise the left hand by reeling energy in the inside of the arm to parry the opponent's attack from the left.

This is a natural sequence of movements created in boxing to transform a posture according to the changes in the environment. Such posture transformations must be light but effective against the opponent's punch. If the opponent dares not approach closer, you needn't lift your left hand up and bend the left elbow to parry his attack; but if he does attack, deflect his hand with your left hand in an ostensibly light and graceful gesture, which is in fact filled with concentrated energy from your whole body. This move should release great force from behind the left hand, which will enable you to surmount any problem. This is implied by the images of hexagram Sun (41), the symbol of lessening placed below, and hexagram Yi (42), the symbol of addition placed above. Hence the image of Sun (41) effectively expresses the movement of going up and ahead.

4. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the Qian Zhao posture*

Keeping the eyes on the left hand, you perform *Qian Zhao*;
Move the left hand up but punch downward,
Once an unbidden guest approaches you.
Assume immortals come from all four sides
To attack you violently,
In open combat your success depends on the skill
To draw your hands with agility and fluidity.

Posture 38

ROLL BACKWARD

Hou Zhao

This figure depicts the final movement of the *Hou Zhao* posture as a continuation of the preceding *Qian Zhao* posture but in the opposite direction. From beginning to end this posture applies energy flow along the inner sides of the arms and legs.

1. *Diagram of the Hou Zhao posture*



Fig. 3.38.1 Roll Backward (Hou Zhao)

Inscriptions:

❶ keep the fingers of the left hand gathered together, as though you are going to lift them up;

❷ relax and drop the left shoulder down;

❸ listen to what is happening behind you;

❹ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head as the guiding force of the whole body;

❺ hollow the chest like an empty vessel;

❻ focus the eyes in front on the right fingertips;

❼ point the right fingers obliquely upward;

❽ sink waist energy (*jing* essence) downward, letting the torso lean forward in closing;

❾ bend the left knee;

❿ the left foot is positioned in readiness to step forward;

⓫ keep the crotch rounded-in to accumulate *jing* essence through closing;

⓬ withdraw the right foot.

2. *General description*

The *Hou Zhao* posture requires you to focus your eyes on the right hand which draws forward from behind to keep the opponent at bay. This technique of drawing the arms forward in rotation from behind against an imaginary opponent is a part of standard everyday *Taiji* exercise. However, if many aggressors come to you from the east, you have to complete the preceding *Qian Zhao* posture and quickly turn around from west to east, first with your head then with your torso and right arm.



Fig. 3.38.2 Diagram of energy flowing in direct movement along the right arm according to the silk-reeling method

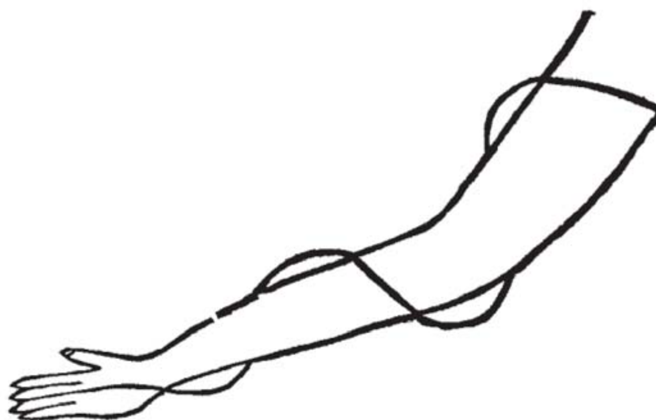


Fig. 3.38.3 Diagram of the energy flowing in reverse direction along the left arm according to the silk-reeling method

Inscription:

- Hang the left hand down with the back of the hand facing north.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

In this posture, face both feet eastward and cross the opponent's arm by circling your right forearm from south to north. As soon as your arm reaches north, bring it down south again to hit your opponent in the torso, making sure to bend your right elbow so that your right hand is positioned about 30 cm in front of the opponent's chest. In this posture, always bend your elbow when circling the arm so that you can stretch it out in counterattack. Both the circular motion and bending should be done in one movement using one integrated effort.

In the preceding *Qian Zhao* posture, the left hand rotates in direct movement (*shun* or inward) while the right hand rotates in reverse (outward) direction, so that the left arm assumes the position of Host while the right arm takes the rear position of Guest. In the current *Hou Zhao* posture, when the opponent counterattacks by quickly turning his body and parrying your preceding *Qian Zhao* movement, your right arm takes the turn of Host while your left arm becomes the Guest. At the beginning of *Hou Zhao*, the right hand (back facing forward) moves from south to north to parry the opponent's attack. Upon crossing the opponent's arm, it then rotates in a circle in direct movement back south in counterattack using the yin-jin technique (see the comments above), stopping when it reaches waist level at the east, the back of the hand facing north and slightly downward. While this takes place, use your left hand to attack the opponent with a smashing blow.

For the *Hou Zhao* posture, bend your right knee in the manner of the lower right bow step, and turn your right foot slightly inward, digging it into the ground. Following the saying, 'Inside the most solid contains empty,' most of your body weight should be on the front right leg while the rear left leg takes the left empty step westward, toes pointing forward. Thus the principle of 'motionlessness within motion' is fully expressed in this posture.



Fig. 3.38.4 Internal power (nei jing) of the right hand rotating in direct movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the right palm rotates to face north;
- ❷ the back of the right hand faces north;
- ❸ the right arm moves from south to north while the right hand rotates in direct movement (*shun* or inward) to draw a circle using the *yin-jin* technique.



Fig. 3.38.5 The way to withdraw the right foot

Inscriptions:

- ❶ withdraw the right foot until it stops at this point;
- ❷ the right foot points east.



Fig. 3.38.6 Diagram of the Chan-si or silk-reeling method used in the right leg

3. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The *Hou Zhao* posture does not require a large-scale rotation technique, but rather a small-scale turn which is adequate for producing agile movements directed by your eyes moving from west to east, in readiness for any easterly threats. Next, quickly turn the torso east and bring the right arm forward from its rear *Qian Zhao* position. Meanwhile, replace the right arm with the left in the technique of *Ye Ma Fen Zong* or Parting the Wild Horse's Mane. Now the right hand draws ahead and the left hand is placed behind. Thus the *Hou Zhao* posture is a small transition leading on to the large-scale posture performed in the image of hexagram Xiao-guo (62), symbol of excess in small things, which overcomes the preceding hexagram, Zhong Fu (61), symbol of true sincerity, with the image of a bird on a wing.

The Xiao-guo hexagram is formed by the trigrams for mountain below and thunder above, with two yang/strong undivided lines in the middle representing the body of a bird, while the four divided lines its wings (two above and two below). The internal lower trigram, that is, lines 2-3-4, is *Dui* (marsh), which represents the mouth and tongue or speech and any produced sounds.

Thus when the opponent approaches from behind, your eastward move should resemble a flying bird emitting silent sounds of flight. The deceiver, that is, he who attacks from behind, will then certainly be punished. Hence the lowest divided line shows its subject "as a bird flying and ascending to heaven without any sense of measure, until the issue is evil," and nothing can be done to avoid this issue. The middle (third) undivided line in the center of the inner *Dui* (marsh) undivided line shows its subject "taking no extraordinary precautions against danger, which consequently finds opportunity to assail and injure him. There will be evil." And how great this evil will be! Trigram *Dui* is allocated to the west according to arrangement of King Wen or the post-birth sequence, while *Xun* (wind) to the east.

Therefore turn around from west to east in the image of the fifth and topmost lines which say, "There is no rain coming from my place at the border to the west." These lines also show "the prince shooting his retrievable arrow in a cave." So while turning eastward, attract and attack the approaching opponent at the same time with your right hand, as if shooting a bird with "a retrievable arrow" or arrow-shaped blade, taking it effortlessly out of your hunting-bag. There is no way to miss hitting your opponent's head or the upper body, it being so large a target, like a cave's entrance. Nevertheless, your moves should be nimble as it is not easy to make large-scale movements quickly. The posture's amplitude should be within the bounds of a small-scale movement to provide agile and effective rotation. In other words, smaller movements allow faster rotations. That is why it is said in the martial arts that, "softness overcomes hardness", and that with softness in the central place you can attain happiness indeed. How great that would be!

4. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the Hou Zhao posture*

All of a sudden turn your face eastward,
And a myriad aggressors will be defeated.
If it is not because of the body's great agility,
Why is this so? Within a flash of thought
They must be destroyed to put an end to aggression.

5. *Five-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

In the twinkling of an eye make clearly eastward;
Can it be that you become a small hero?
The only thing you need to do is to protect your head;
To be afraid of a crowd means to scare people like you.

Posture 39

Wild Horse Shakes Its Mane on Both Sides or Parting the Wild Horse's Mane

Ye Ma Feng Zong

Postures such as *Shan Tong Bei, Er Qi Jiao* and *Dao Juan Hong* are categorized as large-scale boxing techniques. As such, *Ye Ma Feng Zong* also belongs to this category of postures.

1. *Diagram of the Ye Ma Feng Zong posture*

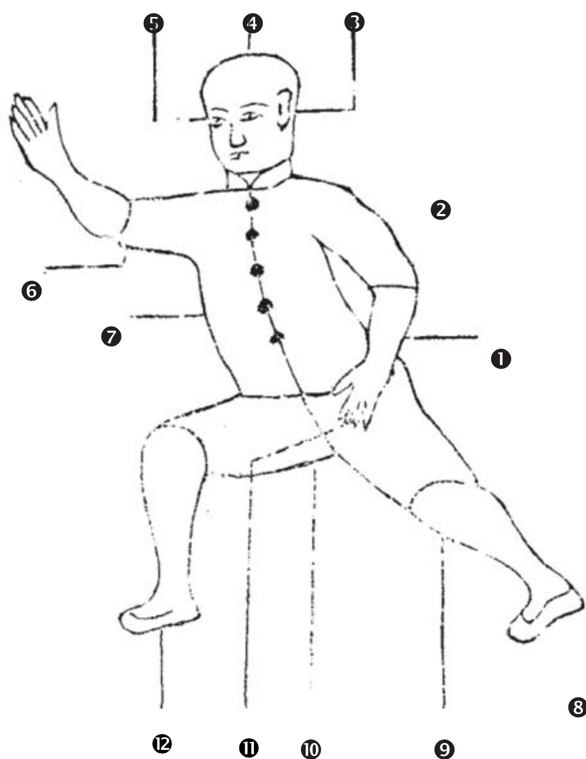


Fig. 3.39.1 Wild Horse Shakes Its Mane on Both Sides (Ye Ma Feng Zong)

Inscriptions:

❶ sink the waist energy down;

❷ drop the left hand down and apply energy (*jing* essence) to the fingers, the back of the hand and the elbow;

❸ listen to the situation behind you;

❹ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head to stimulate the energy of the whole body;

❺ glance quickly to the left and right;

❻ draw the right hand forward and up to apply energy to the upward pointing fingers and the back of the hand, in a manner similar to the left hand;

❼ hollow the chest to fill it with energy;

❽ the left foot is in a ready position to step forward;

❾ bend the left leg at the knee but do not relax it;

❿ sink down the crotch energy (*jing* essence), the lower the better;

⓫ the right wrist faces down with fingers pointing forward;

⓬ stamp the right sole on the ground to increase the stability of the stance.



Fig. 3.39.2 Rear view of Ye Ma Feng Zong

2. *General description*

The *Ye Ma Fen Zong* posture implies that both arms separate and spread out to imitate the image of a wild horse such as a mustang, which shakes its mane left and right, hence the origin of its name. As mentioned earlier, this posture is seen as one of the large-scale *Taijiquan* forms, so lean the body forward and slightly sideways while advancing. The whole body is lead by the energy at the top of the head. Both knees are bent, the crotch is empty and rounded-in so as to allow energy (*jing* essence) to pass through.

If an attack comes from the left, draw the left arm leftward and up with palm facing out (up), while resting the right hand at crotch level beside the right thigh. Conversely, if attacked from the right, circle the right arm rightward and up in direct rotation with the palm facing out, while the left hand rests at crotch level on the left. This move is employed to attract the opponent to advance further into emptiness while counter-attacking at the same time. It can also be applied against multiple aggressors coming from all sides by enabling you to penetrate their ranks, thus defeating them in small groups. In fact, this technique is quite difficult to beat even with many opponents attacking.

3. Diagram of both arms' rotation with internal power (nei jing) generated through the silk-reeling method

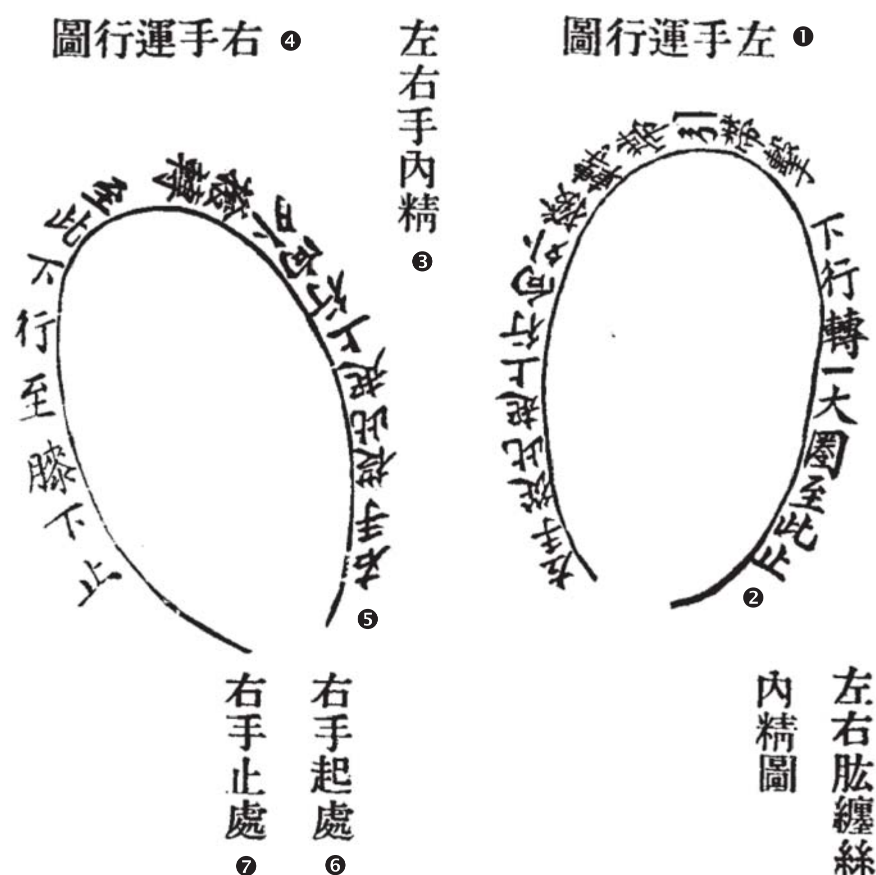


FIG. 3.39.3 DIAGRAM OF BOTH ARMS' ROTATION WITH INTERNAL POWER (NEI JING) GENERATED THROUGH THE SILK-REELING METHOD

Inscriptions to the right circle:

- ❶ diagram of the left hand's movements;
- ❷ from this place the left hand rotates upward and outward to attract and counter-attack simultaneously; then it continues downward in a big circle until it stops at this location.

Inscription between circles:

- ❸ the internal power of both hands.

Inscriptions to the left circle:

- ❹ diagram of the right hand's movements;
- ❺ from here the right hand rotates upward and outward until it reaches this point, then continues downward to its position at knee level;
- ❻ the place where the right hand starts its movement;
- ❼ the place where the right hand completes its movement.

4. *Diagram of the both hands reeling in direct movement*

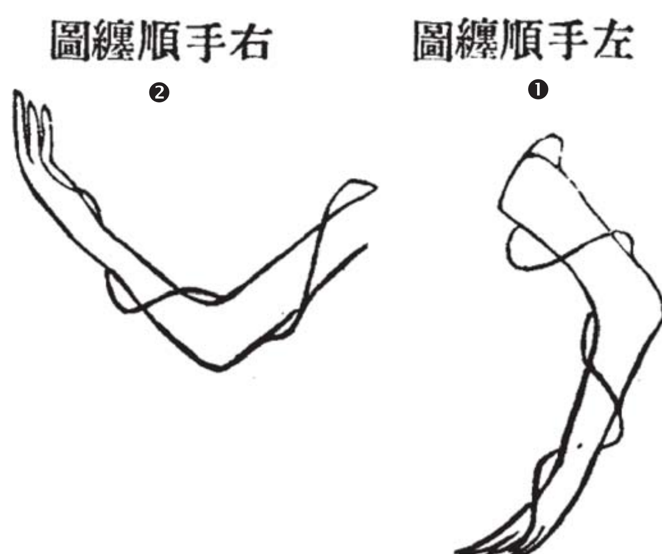


Fig. 3.39.4 Diagram of both hands reeling in direct movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ Diagram of left hand reeling in direct movement;
- ❷ Diagram of right hand reeling in direct movement.

The left hand moves up while the right hand moves down as the circle turns over. At the same time, take two steps forward with the left and right feet in the same rhythm as the hands' movements. When the right hand moves up, look at the left hand resting below.

5. *Diagram of Ye Ma Fen Zong as the embodiment of Qian (1) lines*

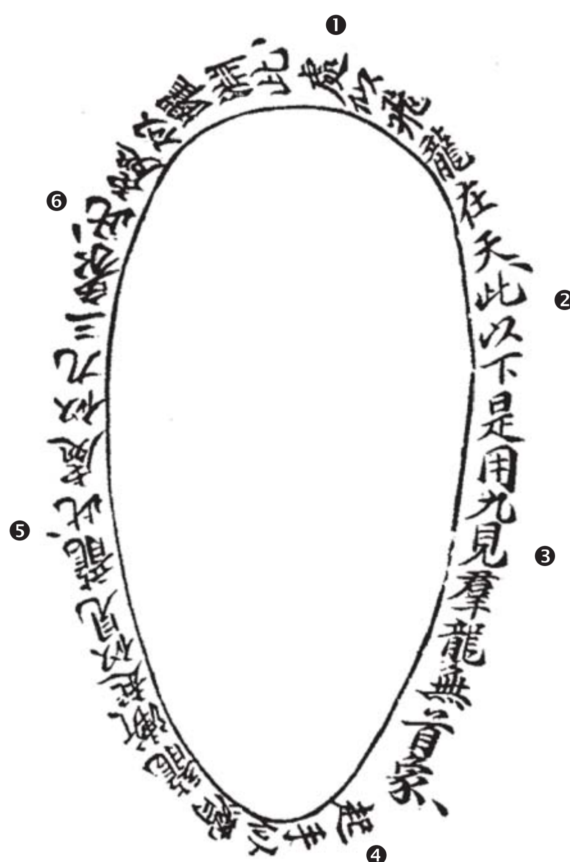


Fig. 3.39.5 Diagram of Ye Ma Fen Zong as embodiment of Qian (1) lines

Inscriptions:

❶ lift the hand like a dragon lying hidden in the deep; it is not time for activity;

❷ lift the hand like a dragon appearing in the field at this location;

❸ move the hand actively and vigilantly at this spot;

❹ the dragon seems to be leaping up here but is still in the deep;

❺ the dragon is on a wing in the sky at this place;

❻ from here we see that all the nine dragons divest themselves of their heads.

This diagram shows a thread of the internal power (*nei jing*) flowing forward and backward between the front and rear of the body. The fingers of both hands are tied and move without leaving a trace. However, while moving, they produce some sounds that indicate the form's limits. After completion of the final movement, the sound and shape of the posture becomes completely soundless and shapeless. Hence it is said that each posture manifests its special features of movements through the formless form. The figure above illustrates the method of circulating both hands. This thread diagram illustrates the method of hand movement through which generated *qi* possesses heavenly nature.

6. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The *Ye Ma Fen Zong* posture expresses pure heavenly nature and correlates with hexagram Qian (1), the symbol of heaven and sovereignity, that is, the supreme ruler. The movement of four limbs and the whole body reflect the all-encompassing concept of Qian. Hence this posture is an expression of the image of heaven, the pure *yang* substance of the *Taiji* motif, of large-scale and extensive movements and of thoughts gifted from the sages of heaven. From the beginning of time, the movements of heaven have prevailed ceaselessly without pause, like the gallop of a wild horse full of good energy and health, running back and forth around the world without stopping. This indeed, is what is known as the image of Qian (1).

The advancing movements of both hands resemble the alternation of the sun and moon in the sky, of day and night lighting up all the myriad things under heaven. At the same time, the power of heaven may be represented by powerful natural phenomena, such as lightning, thunder, cyclones and rainstorms, which are able to crush all obstacles out of the way.

When the wind blows, grasses sway. To sweep away all obstacles, apply the *Ye Ma Fen Zong* technique in the image of Qian. This means that the *qi* applied in this form emerges directly from the bottom of *Yuan-qi* to stimulate movements and produce internal pressure which draws back to lure the

opponent deeper into the exhausted battlefield. Skill is required to launch the movement exactly from the center of the feet and hands. If there is no way to advance, resort to the wonderful technique of *Ye Ma Fen Zong* in the image of Qian, the expression of healthy, graceful and natural power. As the saying goes: "Heaven in its endless and cyclic movement gives the idea of power and strength. Vast indeed is the great and originating spring indicated by Qian! Kind and sincere is it in its worldly manifestations!"

both hands move in a 'brush-ground' gesture, on the one hand, and obliquely upward, on the other hand, in rotation.

'To hold the land with both hands' means that both hands alternate between doing a brush-ground gesture and an oblique movement upward. The whole body first follows the left hand then the right hand rotation to transition from the preceding *Hou Zhao* posture to *Ye Ma Fen Zong*. Meanwhile, a thread of this transitory link, also known as a 'red line of flowing *Zhong-qi*', issues from acupoint Bai-hui at the top of the head to run down the spine to acupoint Zhang-qiang at the tailbone, passing through a number of acupoints and vertebrae in between. When the right hand draws up, the left hand descends into a hold-ball gesture to make a circle, then both hands reverse positions by rotation, that is, the left hand up and the right hand down. Thus the left style alternates with the right one like 'dancing hands' to keep the circle unbroken, resulting in a knife-sharp energy able to cut through enemy ranks.

7. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

Hold the land with both hands, swoop like a bird on a wing;
There is a thread between the two, which links together:
Left and right, ups and down, without any inclines.
Let them ring you in densely with a thousand troops
Without a crack in their ranks. So move the ring left,
And move the ring right to break the enemy ranks.

Verse 2

A single man is rounded up with a myriad of foes;
What kind of technique must he resort to to become a hero?
There is the way of a whirling gust,
Which splits to the left and right.
So how many years should he spend
To build an outstanding foundation of *gong-fu*?

Posture 40

SINGLE WHIP (5TH PERFORMANCE)

Dan Bian

1. Diagram of 5th performance of Single Whip

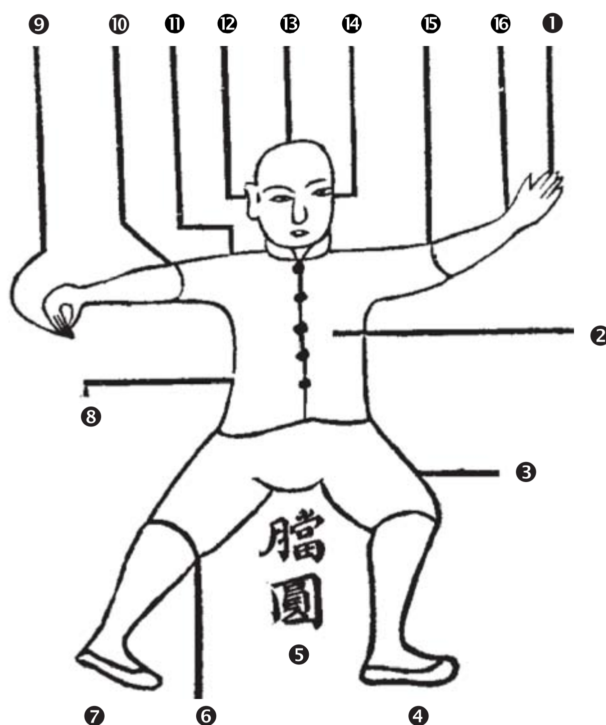


Fig. 3.40.1 5th performance of Single Whip (Dan Bian)

Inscriptions:

❶ tense the root of the left fingers using strength and keep the fingers gathered;

❷ hollow the chest, placing the torso slightly forward;

❸ bend the left knee;

4. position the left foot in the shape of the Chinese character 'eight' (八), which means that the toes turn slightly inward; press the left toes, ankle and calf downward, digging firmly into the ground;
5. round-in the crotch;
6. bend the right knee;
7. point the right toes forward to form a hook foot position;
8. sink waist energy (*jing* essence) down;
9. gather the fingertips of the right hand and turn them downward from the wrist to form a hook hand gesture;
10. put both elbows slightly forward;
11. relax both shoulders;
12. listen to the situation behind you;
13. focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head to stimulate the energy of the whole body;
14. look at the middle finger of the right hand;
15. bend the left arm at the elbow in the shape of a new moon;
16. do not loosen both wrists too much.

2. *General description*

In principle, the *Dan Bian* posture is expressed here in a very similar way to its first performance. Again, this posture reflects all the rules and principles throught its body movements and position of the hands and its footwork, which apply the internal and external method of silk-reeling to regenerate energy. The only difference between the two performances is the environment in which they deal with. That is, the first performance of *Dan Bian* emerges from the *Lan Zha Yi* posture, while this fifth performance continues on from the *Ye Ma Fen Zong* posture.

After taking a left step forward with the left hand moving up, take a wide step east with the right foot and flatten it on the ground. Then step west-

ward with the left foot to form the *Dan Bian* posture. When stepping east with the right foot, the right hand draws obliquely up and east in a large circle to generate internal power (*jing* essence) in direct rotation, that is, in-up-out, then moves obliquely downward using the silk-reeling method until it reaches the right armpit. From this point on the first performance of *Dan Bian* is identically repeated.

The internal power of the right foot generates strength to take a wide step forward using a lower and stable stance.

2. *Diagram of the right foot's movement forward*



Fig. 3.40.2 Diagram of right foot's movement forward

Inscriptions:

❶ the place where the right foot stops;

❷ the right foot takes a wide step east; passing beside the left foot as it steps forward;

❸ the place where the right hand starts to move;

❹ the place where the left foot flattens on the ground behind the right foot.

4. *Diagram of the right hand's movement*

The right hand draws forward in the silk-reeling style, so do not stretch the right arm out completely. From the start of the posture, gather together the fingers of the right hand and do not spread them apart.



Fig. 3.40.3 Diagram of the right hand's movement

Inscriptions:

❶ taking a step forward, move the right and left hands so that the right hand is ahead while the left is behind; move the right hand up and east from its position at knee level, applying the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration;

❷ the place where the right hand starts to move;

❸ the place where the left hand rests behind the right hand;

❹ the place where the right hand stops.

5. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

Acupoints Shan-zhong, Jiu-wei, Qi-hai, Dan-tian, as well as the figures *Kan* (water) and *Li* (fire) are associated with the first performance of the *Dan Bian* posture. The right step east corresponds to the image of hexagram Jin (35), the symbol of forwardness and advancement. It is also associated with hexagram *Zhen* (51), whose fifth divided line shows its subject "coming and going amid the startling movements of the time," in so far as his doings are full of risk. Hexagram *Zhen*, symbol of startling movement, is associated with feet and the easterly direction. So when the right foot takes a step east, the direction is perilous from above and below. Hence the subject takes a risk in doing this.

6. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

VERSE 1

Take an urgent step east with the right foot,
While the right hand draws to the east and up.
As long as the energy is at the top of the head,
All the body parts connect with the elbows,
Like a hawk soaring into the sky.

VERSE 2

The left hand is at the left to protect this side,
While the right hand reflects the shape of the full moon.
Moving up the left hand takes a slanting pose
To soar in the sky from the flat ground,
Like the grand ancestor of all celestial beings.

Posture 41

FAIR LADY WORKS AT SHUTTLES

Yu Nu Chuan Suo

1. *Diagram 1: Body movement in reverse direction and right hand in direct movement in the Yu Nu Chuan Suo posture*



Fig. 3.41.1 Body movement in reverse direction and right hand direct movement in the Yu Nu Chuan Suo posture

Inscriptions:

❶ the left elbow and left hand rest 6-7 *cun*[1] in front of the chest;

❷ the position of the left foot repeats the final step of *Ye Ma Fen Zong;*

❸ the left foot is in a position ready to advance;

❹ the right foot takes a the first wide step forward to continue;

❺ beginner practitioners draw a large circle with the right arm, but more the experienced practitioners should decrease the amplitude of the circle naturally;

❻ the right palm faces obliquely upward;

❼ drop the relaxed right shoulder completely down;

❽ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head.

The direct movement from north to south corresponds to the *Qing Long Chu Shui* or Green Dragon Out of the Water posture and represents direct advancing from north to south. The *Er Qi Jiao* posture correlates with the jump up technique. As for the *Yu Nu Chuan Suo* posture, it requires a large-scale body movement: the position of the upper body resembles *Ye Ma Fen Zong*, while the right hand moves down then up in a circle in silk-reeling rotation eastward, like a bird on a wing with fingers stuck together. The body weight shifts to the rear supporting the right leg. At the same time, the right hand draws up in a direct silk-reeling movement. Raise the body using strength and take three wide skips totaling 8-9 *chi*[2] starting from the right foot. Focus your attention on the energy accumulated at the top of the head to stimulate waist energy to rise with the right hand as it moves up. The right hand's movement resembles a bird of prey flywing swiftly forward over the ground. Hence take three wide skips in sequence to achieve a momentum powerful enough to break a bamboo stick.

[1] about 20 cm.
[2] about 3 m.

2. *Diagram 2: Left forward footwork of the Yu Nu Chuan Suo posture*

This is the second skip forward of the posture, and is taken with the left foot, the torso facing obliquely south. It may be considered as the transitory step between the initial and the final skips.

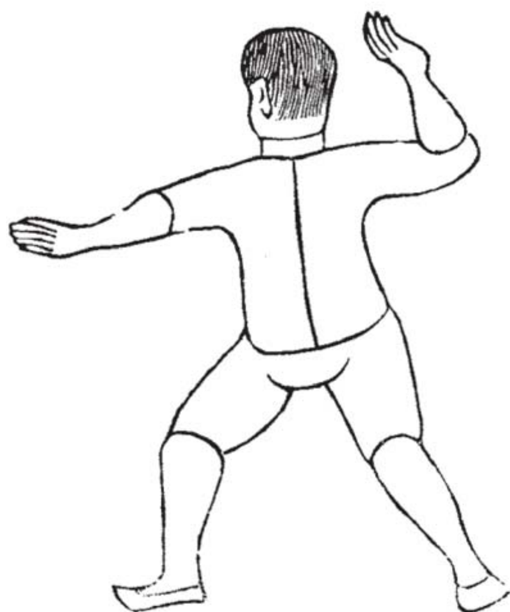


Fig. 3.41.2 Left forward footwork of the Yu Nu Chuan Suo posture

Skip forward with the left leg, toes pointing east, while the right toes point west. The faster your handwork, body turn and footwork, the better.

3. *Diagram 3: Final movement of the Yu Nu Chuan Suo posture*

The body turns together with right skip: the right side faces forward, the torso faces north, the right toes point east. Taking a wide skip, stop as if not stopping.



Fig. 3.41.3 Final movement of the Yu Nu Chuan Suo posture

Focus your attention on the lower body which plays the main role in this posture, and whose form is very similar to *Lan Zha Yi*. The difference between both postures lies in the body's left and right turns. When the right foot skips forward, the right hands do so as well. Meanwhile, the energy and spirit of the whole body must be settled and quiet to connect the upper and lower limbs so as to protect the body from attack.

Swiftness plays a critical role here, so if true *gong-fu* is to be experienced, your *qi* must surge forth in a burst and your spirit quickened as if in a heightened state of alert. Facing the oncoming opponent, you must try to pass *Zhong-qi* throughout the upper and lower body. Though you may not be able to protect yourself from the many opponents surrounding you, no matter how many opponents there may be, you should act as if none exist, relying only on your inborn courage and extraordinary daring which are reinforced with the spirit of justice, correctness and determination. Moreover, your intensive training and devoted practice over a long period will indeed serve to build the grounding for an effortless evasion from hostilities.

4. *Internal power of body movement*

The three diagrams illustrating the Fair Lady Works at Shuttles posture do not depict in full detail the body turns and maneuvers from beginning to end. Bearing that in mind, note that the third diagram illustrating the final movement is the most important.

Draw the right hand and right foot in direct rotation, while the torso turns backward. Then skip three steps forward to send internal power from the top of the head down to the toes of both feet. Throughout this posture, the movements of the right hand and right foot play the principal role, while the left hand and left foot assume supportive roles. Thus the right limbs move in direct rotation but the left limbs move in reverse. This maneuver reflects natural conditions. No-one possesses unlimited strength, so you should hold fast onto the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration, never relinquishing it even for a moment. Hence there is no need to discuss this further.

5. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

Taking advantage of *Qian*, symbol of heaven, power and health, we should adopt the image of *Li* (fire), which is empty inside and solid outside. Once your mind/heart is empty, all the myriad principles and the ways of management become quite easy to handle with respect to the opponent's actions. In fact, *Li* refers to the second daughter, who correlates with *Kun* (earth). At the same time, all that corresponds with *Kun* also correspond with *Qian* (heaven), as long as old *yang* gives birth to young *yin* from which *Zhong-qi* arises. Hence the posture is also allocated to *Qian*.

Since *Li* has intercourse with *Kan*, which is solid inside and empty outside, we can see how solid *qi* fills up internal emptiness. Moreover, one of the special features of *Yu Nu Chuan Suo* is the quick advance, much like a gust of wind, and as such, it corresponds also with *Xun* (wind). Hence the posture is associated with hexagram Xun (57). *Xun* has intercourse with *Zhen*

(thunder), symbol of movement and feet, to correspond with the posture's stance. Once your legs move fast, the upper body and hands also move swiftly to break the opponents' attack. The image of the second and oldest daughters is derived from the image of the 'father'. Hence although this posture is titled under the lady's emblem, it is in fact more closely related to *Qian*, the course of heaven. Pay due attention to this aspect hidden deeply inside and nothing will escape from your intense scrutiny.

6. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

Now you turn in attract, now you turn in attack
To break through the surrounding double ring.
Like a weaver who works at a shuttle loom,
Your bearing is upright; your advance is rapid —
Who can compare with you in speed!
Put some spirit in all your doings,
Which comes from antiquity with great tradition.

Verse 2

In heaven a fair lady works at the golden shuttles,
Which comes and goes weaving silk fabric.
He who finds the central place in *Taijiquan,*
Is able to run as a rabbit and fly as a bird on a wing.

Posture 42

HOLDING ONE LAP PULL ON THE ROBE

Lan Zha Yi

This is the third performance of *Lan Zha Yi,* and it is similar to the first one in every respect.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

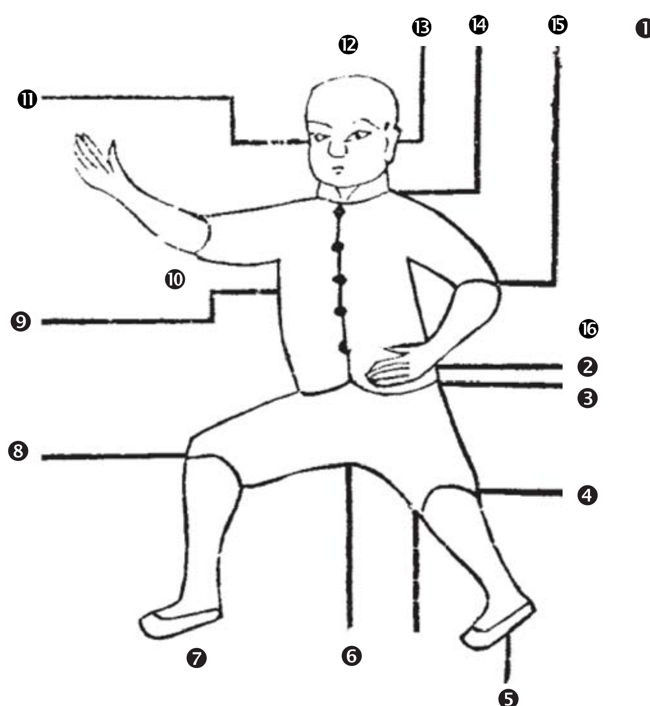


Fig. 3.42.1 Final movement of the Yu Nu Chuan Suo posture

Inscriptions:

❶ to clarify the right hand's initial and final movements, the red line in the picture refers to the figure's successive moves, while the black line to the preceding ones;

❷ the left hand forks the waist on the left;

❸ sink waist energy downward;

❹ bend the left leg at the knee but do not loosen it too much;

❺ place the left sole firmly on the ground;

❻ round-in and empty the crotch;

❼ press the right calf, ankle, foot and root of toes down, digging them into the ground;

❽ place the right knee forward;

❾ empty the chest in the image of a hollow vessel;

❿ hang the right elbow down;

⓫ gaze only at the middle finger of right hand, not at the sides of the hand;

⓬ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head: this means that *Zhong-qi* surges up to the crown of the head to lead the energy of the whole body, otherwise the entire flow of qi will break and split into upper and lower segments, resulting in instability of the feet, rigidity of the upper body, and leading to overall sluggish and clumsy body movements which express the form insipidly without any real substance;

⓭ listen to the situation at the back of the body;

⓮ sink the relaxed shoulders down;

⓯ keep the fingers of the right hand together and upright, do not loosen the right wrist too much;

⓱ drop the left elbow down.

2. *General description*

The current performance of *Lan Zha Yi* replicates its first performance in every respect, including the body movements and footwork. However, the transition from *Jin-gang Dao Dui* to the first *Lan Zha Yi* seems to be easier than its performance here following the *Yu Nu Chuan Suo* posture. This is because the preceding *Yu Nu Chuan Suo* implies the breaking through of a dense ring of opponents, which requires the body to turn left and right to stimulate the extremely disruptive power of the right hand in its final eastward movement.

In Diagram 3 of the *Yu Nu Chuan Suo* posture [Fig. 3.41.3], we see right hand positioned at the threshold of *Lan Zha Yi*, that is, ready to draw a circle from the right to move forward into *Lan Zha Yi*. Thus the right hand gesture in *Lan Zha Yi* is aimed at defending against attacks from the outside.

Lure the opponent's attack downward to your lower body and move your right hand sideways and down, outside in, until it is positioned in front of your right ribs. Then move your right hand up in a big circle eastward to form the final movement of *Lan Zha Yi*. Simultaneously, withdraw your right foot from the east to gather it in front of the left foot. At the same time, rotate the right foot slowly in a semi-circle in a step eastward as the right hand moves.

Place the left heel on the ground and slowly flatten it in the shape of the Chinese character 'eight' (八), digging the toes firmly into the ground. After the right foot flattens on the ground, re-adjust the rear part of the left heel to form the Chinese character 'eight' with the right foot, distributing the body weight equally between the legs through the silk-reeling method. The right hand moves in direct rotation while left hand in reverse, so sending coils of energy from the root of the fingers along the arms through both armpits, coiling downward until it reaches the feet. After stepping forward with the right foot, the energy coils outward and up from the right toes to the crotch and acupoint Hui-yin to pass to the rear of the left thigh.

Only those who move all over under the sky can apply the silk-reeling method in practice. Those who do not move cannot use it in everyday life. It is that simple. If you do not try to feel and experience the energy coming to your thighs, it will be another sort of stance. To take the proper stance, you have to integrate the upper and lower body and send energy to the left leg by reeling it from inside out and upward until it reaches the Hui-yin, connecting the right and left thighs. This energy also promotes dense integration (closing) between the upper and lower body by flowing up and down in opposing directions.

Therefore it is said that although the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration operates most effectively under conditions of tranquility, if you do not try to do it in everyday practice by feeling and experiencing the energy in the crotch area, you will never be able to produce 'closing', that is, the method of accumulating energy quickly and effectively. In fact, if acupoint Hui-yin is not fully included in the operation of closing, the power in the crotch area will not be able to support energy passing through and circulating, and as such, the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration will not be experienced effectively.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

Fig. 3.42.2 and 3.42.3 illustrates the posture in two halves: the first half corresponds to the final movement of *Yu Nu Chuan Suo*, while the second half illustrates the movements of *Lan Zha Yi*.

The arm and red line in Fig. 3.42.2 illustrate the first half of the posture. The red line indicates the act of attracting the opponent into emptiness and the trace of his advance, according to the saying, "Contract before you spread out."

The black line illustrates the method of 'bending in order to stretch' when attacking. First draw a circle then move the arm forward, otherwise both the arm and hand will lack strength.

a) Final movement of Yu Nu Chuan Suo

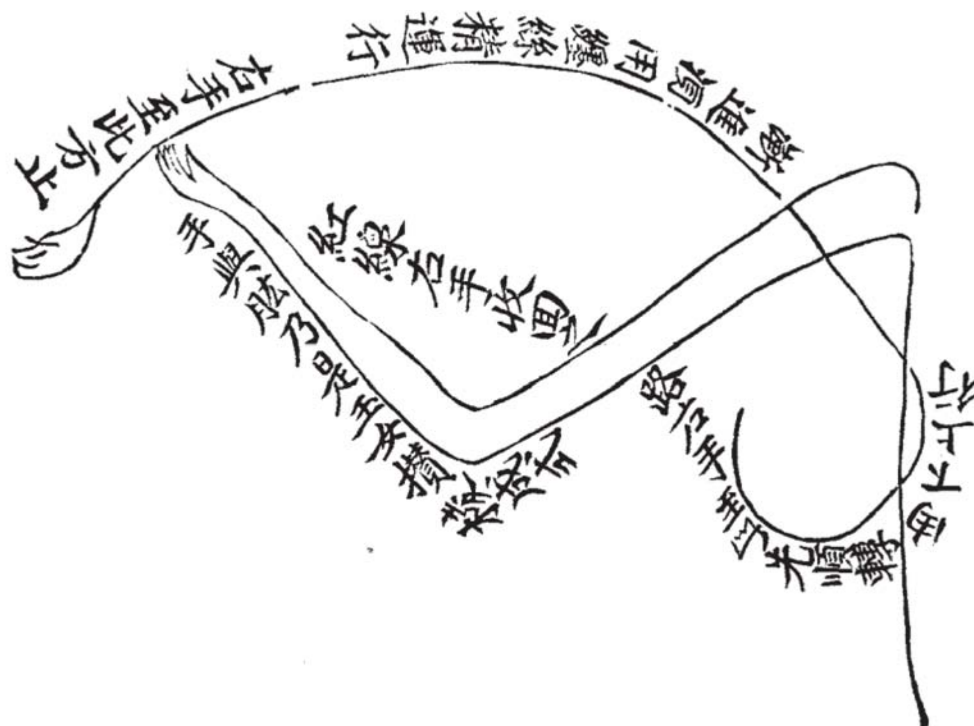


Fig. 3.42.2 Final movement of Yu Nu Chuan Suo

Inscriptions:

- Hand and arm are still allocated to the final movement of the Fair Lady Works at Shuttles posture. The red line depicts the right hand withdrawing, while the left hand moves in direct rotation upward until it stops at this point. Advance slowly while applying the silk-reeling method to regenerate energy until the right hand stops at this location.

When practicing boxing, you must apply the silk-reeling method and technique of adhering to the opponent, as fully manifested in this posture. The method of attracting the opponent to further advance and trapping her into emptiness is also represented here through the slow movement. Do not make abrupt movements. After practicing *gong-fu* over a long period,

you will be able to exert such influence over others that no one will dare to approach in attack. So, while to 'advance' means to attack, to 'retreat' means to attack as well. The red line depicts withdrawing with the right foot in the final movement of the *Yu Nu Chuan Suo* posture.

b) Movements of Lan Zha Yi

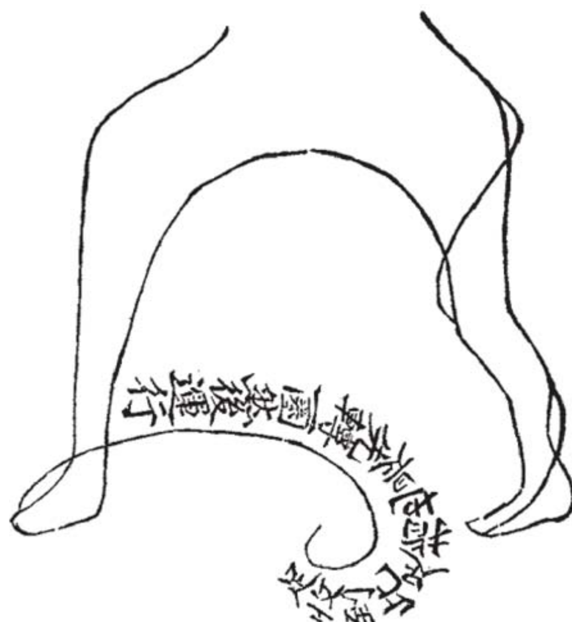


Fig. 3.42.3 Movements of Lan Zha Yi

Inscription:

- draw the right foot to the ground at this location — first draw a circle, then take a step.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The third performance of *Lan Zha Yi* follows the *Yu Nu Chuan Suo* posture. It is used to fend against oncoming attacks in situations of danger and hardship. The right hand embodies the image of 'inhibitor', representing 'danger' and 'arrest' as indicated by hexagram Meng (4), the symbol of enlightening the ignorant. Meng is comprised of the mountain trigram above

and the water trigram (*Kan*) below, that is, a rugged image with a stream in it, thereby suggesting the idea of perilous advancement.

Ignorant people who come to defeat you are met with the *Ye Ma Feng Zong* posture (posture 39), then with *Yu Nu Chuan Suo*, with which you smash your way through all obstacles on the dangerous and difficult path forward. However, your opponents remain ignorant of your steadfast hold on solid principles, moral activities and virtues, which are reflected in the undivided strong line in the middle of trigram *Kan* (water). The external lines above and below are divided and weak in order to attract the opponent further into your trap of emptiness, whereupon your control over him is complete. Hence those who know you dare not attack rashly and you should, by conducting yourself in accordance with the image of hexagram Meng (4), enlighten those who are still ignorant to put them on the true path of righteousness, where they will lose all ideas of aggression.

So, in the topmost undivided line of Meng (4), we see the subject "meeting the ignorant youth. Though no advantage would come from smiting him, there will be advantage, however, in warding off the baneful influence of the world from him." Thus all your deeds are done in accordance with your duties and nature. The lower *Kan* trigram (water) is associated with the second son and denotes strength, correctness and power. The upper *Gen* (mountain) trigram represents hands which mean 'to arrest' when applied here. Within a year the energy will start to move toward the solid center, so how can you stop this natural development of things with mere hands! Destruction of the opponent occurs at the skin level, and it can be compared to a son who leaves the family house, meaning that you emerge from the solid center to activate your energy at skin level. In fact, not many people realize that the ignorance of youth is the embodiment of a single-mindedness to achieve a great ambition.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

The Yu Nu Chuan Suo posture steps eastward:
Light body movement runs straight into the crowd.
Although there are young gangs around you waiting to invade,
With one blow of *Zhong-qi* you will reveal the winner.

Verse 2

Break through the hostile ring around by means of *Lan Zha Yi*,
Repeatedly scattering the crowd, only a few know of it.
Now catch and now deflect, using the silk-reeling method.
You have to enter deep into this technique
To discover the secret of the heavenly mystery.

Posture 43

SINGLE WHIP (6TH PERFORMANCE)

Dan Bian

The *Dan Bian* posture here mirrors its performance after *Shan Tong Bei* and is performed in reverse rotation after evading a dangerous situation. This means it is similar to the previous *Dan Bian* form, the only difference being the sequence in which it is performed to protect the body and put the opponent in a difficult position. Hence, although this posture is the same with the previous *Dan Bian*, the time and environment of it's performance is different.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

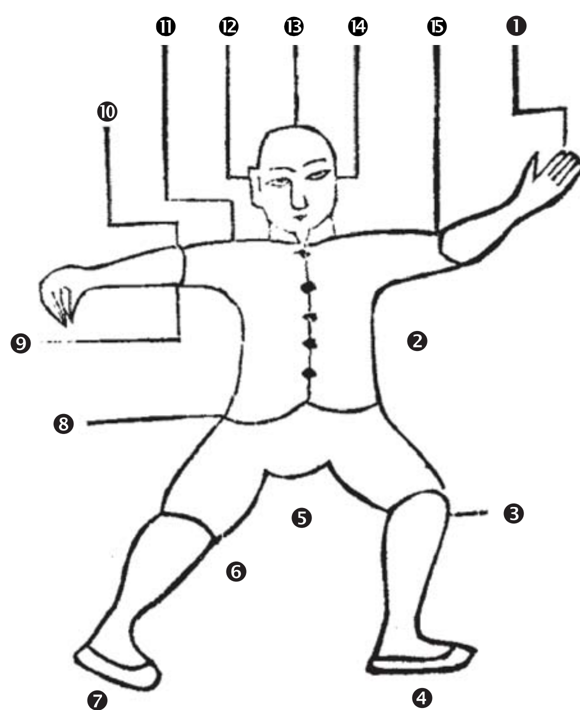


Fig. 3.43.1 5th performance of Single Whip (Dan Bian)

Inscriptions:

❶ keep the left hand tight at the root of the fingers;
❷ hollow the chest in closing;
❸ place the left knee slightly forward;
❹ flatten the left sole completely on the ground;
❺ round-in and empty the crotch;
❻ place the right knee slightly forward (1 cm);
❼ set the right foot on the ground;
❽ sink waist energy downward and forward;
❾ place the back of the right hand slightly forward, pointing its bunched fingertips obliquely down and back;
❿ hang the right elbow down and put it slightly forward to integrate the upper and lower body;
⓫ loosen both shoulders and drop them down;
⓬ listen attentively to the situation behind you;
⓭ focus *jing* essence at the top of the head;
⓮ look at the middle finger of the left hand;
⓯ bend the left arm and point the elbow tip north.

2. *General description*

The body movement and footwork of the current *Dan Bian* posture bears no difference to its predecessors — all performances are required to adapt to environmental changes. Both hands use the cumulative power of the shoulders, elbows, the back of the body, as well as the feet and legs, against the opponent's attack: the left hand deflects the opponent's punch, while the right hand wards-off or blocks in a backward hook hand gesture appropriate to the circumstances.

In the situation where numerous opponents encircle you from right and left, it is very important to place yourself at the exact center of the encroaching circle so that you can apply both hands in any direction you need like the arrows rotating around the clock-face. If attacked from both sides simultaneously, employ the *Zhong Dan Bian* or Equilibrated Single Whip posture; if attacked from the right, use *Lan Zha Yi*; if attacked from the left, use the *Dan Bian* technique, which is most suitable under these circumstances, and hence used repeatedly.

When the opponent starts to provoke you, the tendency is for your mind/heart to advance impulsively in reaction, rejecting all thought of retreat. If you know nothing of retreat, your mind/heart resembles a trapped object. If you ask me what kind of trapping I refer to, then in this case you should know that in order to advance you first need to understand the true meaning of retreat, which in actual fact, means to attract, that is, attracting into emptiness, using softness to defeat hardness. This means learning how not to be at the receiving end of the opponent's strength. In other words, in order to learn to advance, one must first learn how not to suffer a bad retreat.

When you plan to advance you have to take into account all probabilities of ambush and the ways of retreat to save your remaining strength if something goes wrong. The moment your strength is exhausted, your arms will hang down and your soles will not feel the ground. But though you may have no strength to fight, you still should fight to retreat, which is not equal to defeat. This is a manifestation of *gong-fu*, the skill of rising before lowering, bending before stretching.

A good man may master many arts and spend much time in search of knowledge and its application in specific conditions, but most of this knowledge will sink into oblivion. In order to thrive, *gong-fu* skills need to be experienced and applied in practice. Despite the myriad systems and techniques existing, those who devote themselves to the mastering of *gong-fu* cannot ignore the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration that lies at the heart of the *Taiji* boxing doctrine.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

a) Diagram of the left hand's movement in Single Whip (Dan Bian)

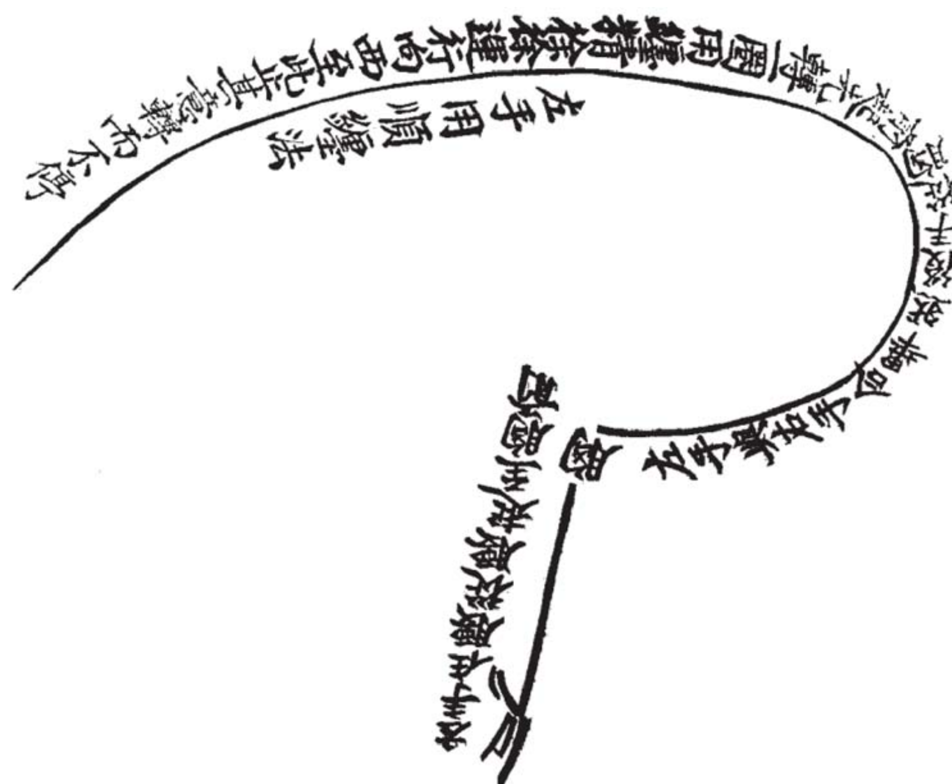


Fig. 3.43.2 Left hand's movement in Single Whip (Dan Bian)

Inscription:

- The left hand moves upward from its position at the left side of the waist until it stops in front of the chest to connect with the right hand in closing. Continue to move the left hand forward in a slow circle westward until it stops at this position in readiness for further movements. The left hand applies the silk-reeling method in direct rotation.

b) Diagram of the right hand's movement

The elbow line[3] faces forward, the elbow tip points backward, and the hand is placed at shoulder level.



Fig. 3.43.3 The right hand's movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the right hand connects with the left hand as soon as the latter is placed in front of the chest, then both hands move forward in a circle in closing. Then the left hand moves westward, while the right hand moves forward with the back of its hand to draw a circle with the left hand in closing;
- ❷ the gathered fingertips of the right hand point backward; the back of the right hand faces forward;
- ❸ the elbow tip points to the south and slightly upward (1-2 cm).

The right foot settles in an immovable position at the east. Re-adjust the position of the left heel so that the toes point northwest. Withdraw the left foot and place it beside the right foot to connect the energy between the two. The right foot remains immovable.

[3] inside the elbow.

c) Diagram of the left footwork

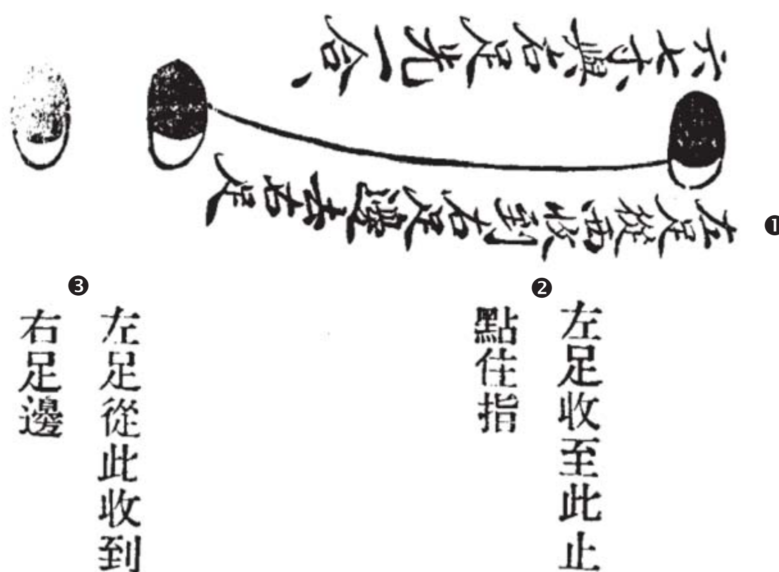


Fig. 3.43.4 Diagram of left footwork

Inscriptions:

- ❶ place the left foot 6-7 *cun*[4] from the right foot to establish a connection between the two. Withdraw the left foot from the west to place it beside the right foot;
- ❷ draw and gather the left foot to the ground at this place;
- ❸ draw the left foot from this place and gather it beside the right foot.

[4] about 20 cm.

d) Diagram of the left foot stepping

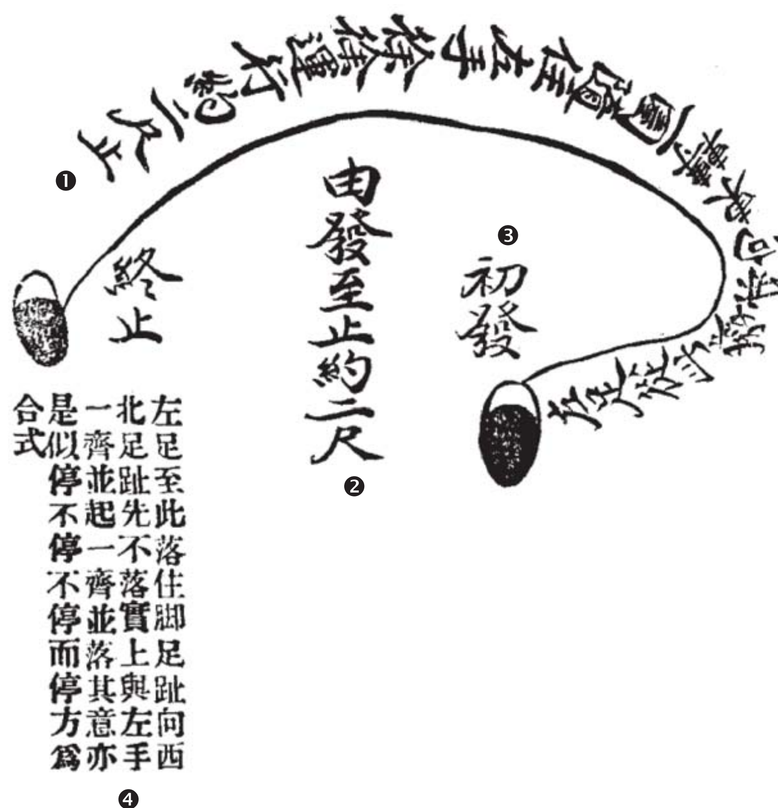


Fig. 3.43.5 Diagram of left foot stepping

Inscriptions:

- ❶ from here the left foot takes a step east (about 65 cm) in a circular movement, while the left hand draws slowly east;
- ❷ the left foot starts to step 2 *chi*[5] away;
- ❸ the left foot's final position;
- ❹ put the left foot down at this place with toes pointing northwest; first flatten the left heel slowly to the ground synchronously with the movement of the left hand; after taking the step, the left foot is in a ready position to move whenever necessary.

[5] about 60 cm.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The *Dan Bian* posture comprises of many images and symbols. First, it expresses the emptiness contained in the Li hexagram (30), symbol of brightness and sunrise. The emptiness of Li activates a number of principles, as shown by the subject of the second divided line who is "attending to others in his central place under the sign of yellow brightness." He will enjoy 'good fortune' due to his right choice of associates who keep strongly to the course of the Golden Mean.

The topmost undivided line shows "the king employing its subject in his punitive expeditions against evil," as his aim is to re-establish order and bring the regions to a harmonious state. "Achieving admirable merit, he punishes only the chiefs of the rebels. He does not punish prisoners who are not associated with the rebels. Hence there will be no error."

The lowest moving line turns the lower trigram into *Gen* (mountain), which is the opposite of *Dui* (marsh). *Dui* denotes joy and pleasure, while *Gen* correlates with the hands and stoppage. The mountain symbolizes stopping by the hands and keeping people immobile, while the marsh implies stopping people not by the hands but through emotions.

The second moving line changes the lower trigram *Li* (fire) into *Qian* (heaven), the opposite of *Kun* (earth). The structure of the latter implies softness outside but solidness inside.

The third moving line changes *Li* into *Zhen* (thunder),the symbol of movement and feet, which is opposite to *Xun* (wind), the symbol of close approach and benefit. The qualities of *Xun* can be increased thrice through taking a step with the left foot, or there would be no sense in advancing. *Zhong-qi* of the *Dan Bian* posture passes through the feet regulates the solid *qi* filling up all the spaces in the image of hexagram *Kan* (water), as indicated by the undivided strong line in the center of the trigram. Hence the posture is allocated to the *Kan* figure too. Thus Kan (29) possesses solid *qi* in the center and she who masters true *gong-fu* can enter the double

peril of *Kan* and avoid perilous traps (symbolized by water) when her endeavors lead her into the mouth of the pit. Hence it is said that, "action in accordance with this will be of high value," meaning that this manner of advance will lead to achievement.

The strong and undivided second and fourth lines of hexagram Li (30) connect with each other in their correct and central places. These lines, located very close to *Zhen*, have intercourse with *Xun*, which is the inverse of *Gen*. The central weak and divided lines of Li, located very close to *Xun*, have intercourse with *Zhen*, which is the inverse of *Dui*. *Zhen* corresponds to the oldest son and official, while *Xun* correlates with the oldest daughter and obedience.

The left hand is placed below and corresponds to *Zhen* and *yang* substance. It is widely acknowledged that *yang* contains *yin*, which is related to the right hand and *Xun* (wind), which corresponds to the oldest son, the commander-in-chief and the disciple. The latter two images are strong inside and weak outside to resist the opponent in the proper way of *Gen* (mountain), symbol of hands and arrest, hence implying a direct and true course. *Dui* (marsh) denotes joy and pleasure, as well as obedience.

The related third and fifth lines of Kan (29), located close to *Gen* (mountain), have intercourse with *Dui* (marsh), which is the inverse of *Xun* (wind). This means that the strong and weak, solid and soft complement each other like a marriage partnership and exert influence over the four hexagrams: Gen (52), Dui (58), Zhen (51) and Xun (57), as well as evoking the graceful movements of the two hexagrams Jian (53) and Jin (35), as the hidden intersections of their wonderful paths.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

Six sages do the deed and each one is chief;
There is *Qian* and *Kun* who light the way.
As a result, they realize who is the true ruler.
Is there a place in the world which is neither *yin* nor *yang*?

Verse 2

Far far away the fair lady works at the golden shuttles,
And in between, holding one lap she pulls on the robe, like a wave.
Suddenly one long snake crosses the path,
Like a graceful dance of Tai E[6] performed in late fall.

[6] 'Tai E' is the name of a sword of great renown and value in China. It has been immortalized in the Chinese saying: "To surrender one's power one who holds the sword backward", referring to the Tai E sword, the symbol of ultimate self-sacrifice.The implication is that even when one possess the means of victory, such as the lethal Tai E sword, one puts oneself in grave peril by handing over one's sword (power) with the handle toward the enemy stranger.

6. *Diagram of the four limbs in cross-transition between Lan Zha Yi and Dan Bian*

The internal energy of *Lan Zha Yi* is released downward while that of *Dan Bian* is released upward.



Fig. 3.43.6 Diagram of the four limbs in transition between Lan Zha Yi and Dan Bian

Inscriptions:

❶ place the right arm obliquely downward, like a cornice along which waters run;

❷ apply the silk-reeling method to accumulate energy coiling from outside in;

❸ for the left arm, also use the silk-reeling method to accumulate energy coiling from outside inward;

❹ draw the left foot to the ground to get an energy connection with the right toes lying flat on the ground;

❺ also flatten the right sole on the ground, turning the big toe slightly inward, and letting the right toes work in concert with the left toes.

7. *Internal power (nei jing)*

This figure depicts the transitional positions of the four limbs pressed down at the juncture between *Lan Zha Yi* above and *Dan Bian* below[7]. The release and flow of internal power (nei jing) depend completely on its regeneration in the mind/heart, which sends the energy to the marrow of the four limbs, filling them right up to the skin. This means that the *Dan Bian* posture charges up the upper body with energy, while *Lan Zha Yi* releases internal power accumulated in the mind/heart.

To accumulate or to close means to make all four limbs work in concert with each other. Meanwhile, the right hand applies the energy accumulated through coiling from outside in to stretch the root of the fingers with strength without straining the hand and elbow. The left hand moves from the left side of the waist upward until it stops just in front and beneath the right nipple, applying the silk-reeling method of power regeneration in the same way, coiling from outside in to get an energy connection with the left fingers.

Set the right foot on the ground in the shape of the Chinese character 'eight' (八) by turning the right toes inward and standing them steadfast. The distance between the right foot and the left foot behind on the ground is 7-8 *cun*[8]. The right foot follows the right hand's movement, while the left foot follows that of the left. Let the mind/heart synchronize the movements of the upper and lower limbs, rotating energy from outside in. If the energy of the whole body is integrated into one, the mind/heart will regenerate energy well. Unleashing the power of the mind/heart means that the whole body structure, including the joints, tendons, veins and bones, should comply completely with the external form to release power from within. Therefore it is said that internal power is a result of accumulation (closing).

[7] Although *Lan Zha Yi* precedes *Dan Bian* according to the sequence of the postures, *Lan Zha Yi*'s internal energy is released downward, while that of *Dan Bian* is released upward.
[8] about 20 cm.

The left hand draws a small circle from right to left to stretch the arm 7-8 cm at the final the resting position, which is, in fact, not a stopping motion. The left arm applies rotation from inside out in the style of the silk-reeling method, while the right hand moves in concert with the left hand, moving up and out, then in and down in a small circle, before finally 'stopping as if not stopping'.

The right arm rotates in reverse coils to re-generate energy, allowing it to flow back and forth through both arms which are linked together in one line stretching forward and backward. Once the energy of both legs and feet work synchronously, the left foot, which has been drawn to the ground, takes a step 1 *chi* and 4-5 *cun* to the left[9] to flatten at the west. To take this step, the left foot first draws a small circle to ensure the foundation of the stance is built correctly and then relaxes completely before taking the step.

The entire situation depends on the movement of heaven and earth — *yin* and *yang* substances create humans whose lives consist of heavenly and earthly *qi* bestowed by Nature. The nimbus of *yin* and *yang* determines the state of the whole body, its vibrations, its ability to turn and bend when opening and closing, to support proper energy circulation and so forth. This is how your body movements correlate with the movements of heaven and earth. When you move, the body structures move as well. The principle of *Taiji* concerns only the mechanism of *qi*. Therefore when you move up or down, back or forth, straight or in a curve, fast or slow, in the opened or hidden manner, in opening or closing, in accumulating or releasing your strength, you cannot avoid the nimbus of *yin* and *yang* that surrounds your body like a colorful image. Just like a flying kite or leaping fish, the liveliness of your nimbus is in constant and ceaseless transformation.

With regards to *Taiji* boxing, you do not have to rely on the excitement produced by your ears, eyes, arms or legs to bring you deep satisfaction and pleasant comfort. Rather, a student of *Taijiquan* first has to delve into the principles and only after understanding and applying will she be able

[9] no wider than 45 cm.

to obtain *qi* energy to produce active movement from within, which will be manifested as agility. Once engendered, such agility can stimulate further movement, thereby activating the mechanism of momentum and re-generation. If you can manifest this principle and support it with the principles of internal power, you will be able to release the latter outward. In a sense, to discuss internal power from this perspective would be superficial and would not do justice to the subject.

It is also said that the inability to fight an opponent is evidence of *gong-fu* deficiency. However, if your *gong-fu* is mature enough, it will resemble a circle so large that it has no external boundaries, while your internal limitations become so minute that you cannot discern its boundaries from within, until you face a stronger opponent and experience your internal power suddenly unleashing outward like a blast of wind or awesome lightening striking the withered and rotten trees around you. This is what you can demonstrate through the current *Dan Bian* posture. To perform the technique properly, you have to first of all accumulate energy through closing, otherwise your performance of *Dan Bian* will have minimal effect. So if you do not know what you are doing, do nothing. It's that simple.

While performing the preceding *Lan Zha Yi* form, you are supposed to deflect the opponent's attack with your shoulder and elbow, pushing him up from below through a rotation. Then draw your right hand forward and down in the image of 'seeing a guest beyond the gate,' using the method of *Kao* or Shoulder-stroke. This means to strike like a 'falling mountain', that is, fast, heavy and without any recoiling. Strike with the elbow, which is lead by the shoulder, the integral part of the energy charged arm.

Move the right hand from its forward position backward in a small circle to strike with the back of the hand. After this back hand strike, prepare for a possible attack from the left by accumulating energy to make both hands work synchronously, following the torso's turn left to deflect any left-sided attack with a left hand strike. Indeed, striking the opponents with both hands is the object of *Dan Bian*. Generally speaking, you must accumulate energy in closing before releasing power when both hands move outward.

Also, make sure both legs are completely involved in the strike, otherwise your counter-attack will not be implemented effectively.

Move according to the prescribed pattern as it will make your *qi* flow without obstructions. When the mechanism of *qi* works smoothly, all thoughts of fighting will disappear and boxing practice becomes effortless, as if doing nothing special. Once you reach this level of *gong-fu*, this means that you are already halfway toward the truth of the art.

8. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The preceding *Lan Zha Yi* posture was formed through releasing or opening energy (*jing* essence). The current *Dan Bian* form marks the beginning of the next sequence. In order to open, you must first accumulate energy through closing and then turn it into opening. This is what is actually meant by 'closing', that is, once a matter reaches its peak, it must return to its opposite. Thus according to the natural principle of development, the culmination of opening reverts to closing, whilst closing returns to opening once it reaches its highest point. Therefore the start of any form, such as this one, may be allocated to hexagram Ge (49), the symbol of change, reform and revolution.

After closing, drop the right wrist downward and slowly turn the open hand face up. At the same time, the left hand moves from its position below the right nipple upward and left, very slowly passing in front of the face and drawing forward to the left. The left hand leads the left arm, which extends out 3 *cun*[10] in the final movement of 'stopping as if not stopping', which is facilitated by the slowness of the motions.

Meanwhile, energy (*jing* essence) stored in bones must be stimulated and increased to fill up to the skin. The fingers of both hands also become so filled with energy that they launch the mechanism of the next posture's

[10] 7-9 cm

movement automatically: after closing with the right hand, the right wrist moves downward to the right, the fingertips gradually bunching and pointing downward and slightly to the back, with the back of the hand facing up and slightly forward.

After the right hook hand ascends to the level of the shoulder at the front, it moves slightly to the right and behind. This movement is extremely complicated to perform properly. While stretching the right arm at the elbow, the right hand should be in accord with the left one so that the energy of the right arm can be drawn in a circle until it stops 'as if not stopping'. Both arms work in concert to accumulate energy gradually so as to release it forward in the final movement through both hands. Hence the posture's movement corresponds with hexagram Jian (53), symbol of gradualness and successive advance, and the posture itself implies the forming of enriched essence or energy which overflows the whole body in the image of hexagram Feng (55), symbol of prosperity. As the saying goes, "Let him be as the sun at noon, for it is for him to cause his light to shine on all under the sky". Hence the final movement of the posture corresponds to Feng (55), meaning that energy (*jing* essence) produced from within fills the whole body up, like the sun at noon that shines on all under the sky.

9. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the 6th performance of Dan Bian*

Now move in opening and now in closing
In the subtle way of a masterful teacher.
In all the four cardinal directions and up and down
Release the mechanism of the refined *qi*.
If all the six sages, the most skillful orators,
Start depicting flying snowflakes,
Even for them the picture remains indescribable.

Posture 44

WAVE HANDS LIKE CLOUDS: LEFT AND RIGHT SIDES

Zuo You Yun Shou

Although this posture has already been previously described, we will attempt here to provide additional insights into the more intangible aspects of the posture to give a more wholistic perspective. To this end, let us first begin by revising the movements of the posture.

Launch the posture by moving the right hand first then the left, remembering that the number of hand movements are unfixed. To launch the movement of the right hand, the left hand moves up first as a 'starter', otherwise the right hand won't be activated. The word 'activation' is used here in the sense of 'leading' or 'starting' the mechanism of *qi* flow — this is required to stimulate the involvement of all parts of the body in the process of *qi* accumulation, if optimal blood circulation is to be achieved.

When the left hand moves down, the right hand moves up. Sink waist energy down to open the pass between the upper and lower body, otherwise *qi* of the whole body will rush upward, leaving the legs unstable. Lift the tailbone slightly up to relax.

1. *Illustration to the posture*

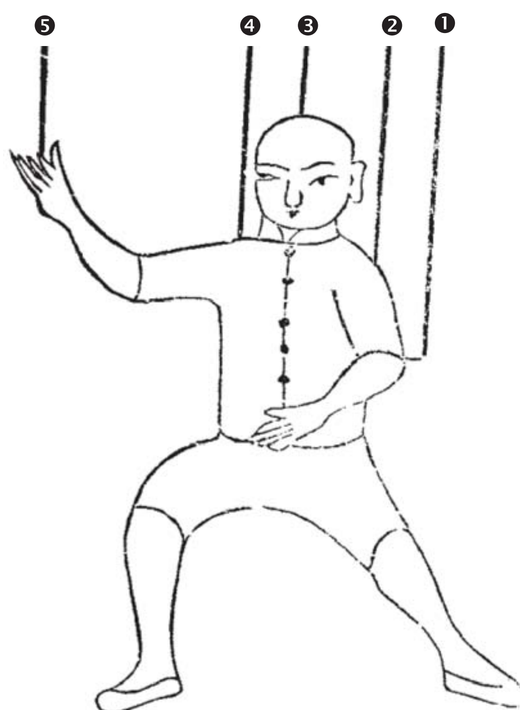


FIG. 3.44.1 WAVE HANDS LIKE CLOUDS: LEFT AND RIGHT SIDES

Inscriptions:

- ❶ sink the elbow down to the left;
- ❷ relax and drop the left shoulder down;
- ❸ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head to lead the rest of the body;
- ❹ relax and drop the right shoulder down;
- ❺ look at the middle finger of the right hand.

Stretch the roots of the right fingers using strength and stick them together. When the right hand moves up, the left hand moves down. Slightly bend the right knee. When the left hand moves down, flatten the left foot on the ground. Raise the buttocks so that the crotch is opened when slightly moved forward during energy accumulation. The right foot follows the

right hand and takes a transverse curved step rightward. Bend the right knee 5-6 cm so that the crotch is opened. Hang the elbow down and hollow the chest, placing the torso a little bit forward to accumulate energy.

Following the right hand's previous upward position, the left hand now moves up to draw a full circle first to the left then to the right. When the right hand completes its circular movement, the left hand is required to move forward in the style of *Gao Tan Ma* until it stops in the position above. The right hand's movement is considered to be leading in the image of Host until it stops in the final movement, at which point the left hand assumes the leading role to stimulate the force and spirit of the whole body by keeping one's gaze on the left hand. As the right hand begins move up in turn, your gaze must be ready to switch to the right hand. Hence your gaze must be ready to alternate between both hands, taking care not to focus directly on the hands and not at the sides, or this will result in the dispersion of your spirit and disturbance of your volition. The movements of the hands are driven by the mind/heart, while force and spirit are manifested through the eyes. The eyes describe the state of the mind/heart, so do not look at the sides of both hands when alternating the hands. Set one foot beside the other to avoid the 'double weight'[11] effect.

[11] *Translator's note:* The 'double weight' effect refers to the principle that when your center of gravity is displaced to one side, that is, if your weight is placed substantially on one side, you can rotate your body along that axis and move fluidly. If, however, you are 'double weighted', you become stagnant. This is the main objective of *Taijiquan* moves, which work on the centrifugal principles of a 'roundabout'. Therefore to avoid being toppled easily, keep your axis aligned with the weighted foot and lower your center of gravity. If, conversely, you spread your weight evenly on both feet, you will find movement difficult due to your 'double weighted-ness', despite a feeling of balance.

2. *General description*

If asked to pin-point the beginning and end of the *Zuo You Yun Shou* posture, I would say that it begins the moment the left fingers lead its arm to rise up. Others would say that it begins when the roots of the right fingers turn in rotation. Still others may say that the initial movement is marked by the circle drawn by the leading left hand, followed by the right hand, so that the latter is at the same level with the right arm as it moves downward in direct rotation until it comes beside the right knee. Then it moves up and passes in front of the chest, mouth, nose and right side of the forehead, and continues to move toward the right shoulder until it stops at its initial position, thus completing a full circle. At this point, the right elbow tip hangs pointing down, while the right shoulder sinks down.

The right foot follows the movement of the right arm in direct rotation. When the right hand reaches knee level from the exterior, simultaneously step the right foot beside the left. At the same time, move the right hand up and out to allow the right foot to take another small transverse step right, to get 5-6 *cun*[12] closer to the left foot. Such a short step signifies entering into emptiness.

When the right hand is positioned beside the right knee to commence its upward circular move, the left hand starts simultaneously to move downward in direct rotation. Meanwhile, the right hand moves up to the right until it reaches its initial position, while the left hand descends to knee level from the outside.

Withdraw the left foot and place it beside the right. At the point where the right hand reaches its lower position beside the right knee, move both hands synchronously to pass the left hand upward across the front of the chest, mouth, nose and left side of the forehead, toward the left shoulder, to finally return to its initial position. At the same time, the left foot takes a transverse step left in direct movement. Since the right foot has been placed about 15 cm shorter from its initial position, you can now take a left

[12] about 15 cm.

step 15 cm wider than the right one. When the left hand reaches its initial position, both hands have drawn a full circle each to the left and right. Still, the momentum of movement continues to draw the right hand up again, while the left hand is already in the upper position ready to start a fresh round of rotations, like the sun and moon alternating each other in the sky, shining endlessly on all under heaven.

If asked what plays the leading role in this posture, I would say that the true ruler here is the mind/heart — whether it wishes to make an alternating move with the hands or feet, all is immediately realized. If the mind/heart demands energy regeneration through the silk-reeling method of coiling in direct rotation, this is applied immediately by both hands. When the mind/heart commands the elbows to drop down and the shoulders to sink as if hanging, its commands are immediately fulfilled. If the mind/heart demands the chest be hollowed and the abdomen connect with the waist energy to sink down through the rounded and opened crotch, all parts assume their proper positions and participate in the process. If it desires to bend the knees, synchronize the movements of the right hand and foot or left hand and foot, or to prevent pain and tiredness of the knees caused by the unsuitable positioning of feet and thighs, all the body structures dare not ignore its orders and obey to the limits of their capabilities. Hence I would call the mind/heart 'the ruler of body movement.'

If asked to provide clues as to the location of the secret to all martial arts, I would reply that it sits somewhere between acupoint Bai-hui at the crown of the head, down to Nao-hou on the nape and Da-chui, then along the spine to Zhang-qiang on the tailbone, to flow through Ren-mai and Du-mai as the true force and spirit of the whole body. It is also said that the pupils of the eyes manifest the state of the mind/heart and its internal movements, and even one's fate, according to martial traditions.

If you need to fight, how can you keep your spiritual state invisible? It is said that that depends on the speed with which your mind/heart works in everyday life. As Mencius says, "In any case, do not praise yourself, neglect yourself nor promote yourself. In any situation, start to settle a problem

from its easy side." This means that first of all you have to calm down and purify yourself of flustered energy to balance *qi* circulation and act in harmony with natural laws — this means to act in the acceptable direction, following rules and regulations. Through long term practice of *gong-fu* you can master your consciousness and self-control to enter the middle grade. Further hard work will definitely bring you unexpected results in managing your mind/heart: all the feelings and states in your mind/heart will be outwardly expressed naturally through your eyes. Thus the opponent may be able to discern the state of your mind/heart by 'scanning' your pupils, coming to read your body's abilities like a book. To prevent this, you need to cultivate your mind/heart until it becomes 'no-minded mind/heart,' meaning that you need to master self-restraint through long-term everyday practice to learn how to be leisurely and carefree in extremely dangerous situations. As Mencius states, "I try to be good at my self-cultivation; I try to bring into effect my Magnificently Refined Energy to make my speech honest and never deceitful." While you may forget this answer as soon as you ask it, I will not, since I have inscribed the answer here and recorded it for good.

When both hands move left and right, they work in concert to divide space into three parts: the upper, middle and lower sections, all three threaded together by one single principle.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

a) Diagram of the movements of the left and right hands

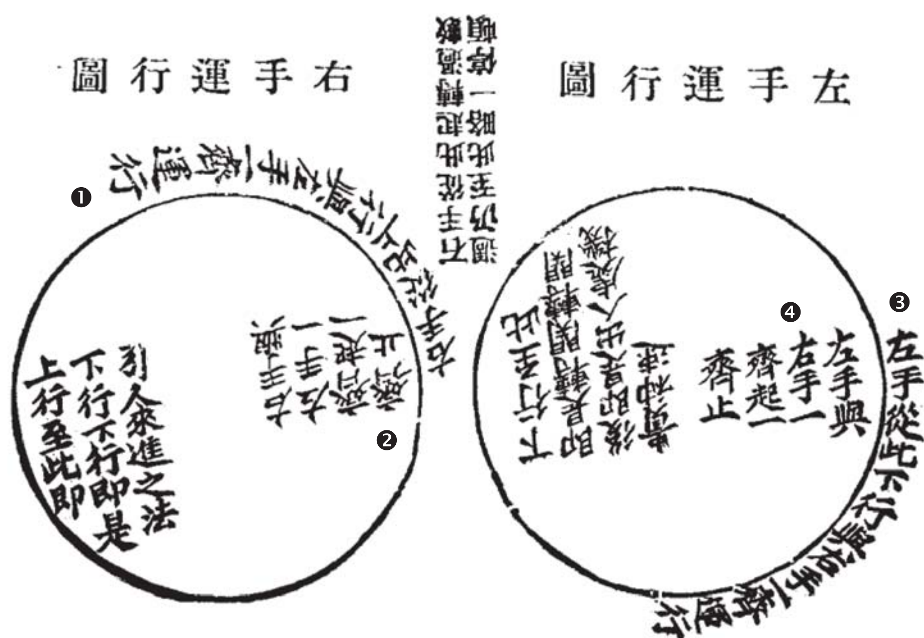


Fig. 3.44.2 Diagram of the movements of the left and right hands

Inscriptions:

❶ the left hand starts to move from this position until it stops at this point;

❷ from this point, the left hand moves downward synchronously with the right hand's movement; both hands work to start and finish at the same time; the left hand moves down until it reaches this place of transition; after reaching the transition, the place of coming in and going out belongs to the mechanism of stimulation.

❸ the right hand starts from this location to draw a few circles until it stops in its initial position;

❹ from this point, the right hand moves up synchronously with the left hand's movement; both hands work to start and finish at the same time; draw in the opponent's attack by moving the right hand downward then upward until it stops at this place.

Although both hands work in concert with each other and start moving simultaneously, the left hand moves downward and left from shoulder level, while the right hand moves upward from the front of the left nipple with arm bent at the elbow. Thus when the left hand is positioned below, the right hand is above. When the left hand reaches its position in front of the right nipple, extend the right arm outwards when moving to the right.

d) Diagram of stimulating Single Whip through completely relaxed shoulders

During boxing practice, the body follows the leading hand's rotating movements, which depends entirely on completely relaxed shoulders, as depicted in Fig. 3.44.3. This is especially reflected by the movements of both hands' in the Single Whip posture.



Fig. 3.44.3 Diagram of stimulating Single Whip through completely relaxed shoulders

Long-term practice of *gong-fu* will cause the shoulder joints to open naturally with no extra effort. If both shoulders are not relaxed and sunk down, the movement of the arms and transitional sequences will be sluggish and stagnant. If not lifted or tensed, the shoulder bones and joints will open naturally and become completely relaxed.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The human heart is allocated to fire, a substance which has no constant shape. As commander-in-chief who manages the movements of the four limbs, the fire of the heart lights the entire picture in the image of hexagram Li (30), the symbol of brightness, sunrise and beautiful attachment. The movements of both hands resemble the beauty of the sun and moon alternating in the sky, shining on all myriad things under heaven with spiritual energy. The movements of the legs resemble the beauty of green fields and thick woods covering the land all around. The beauty in heaven and on earth resonates to amplify the brightness and correctness of the upper and lower body and the hands and feet at the course of the Golden Mean.

The human mind/heart is full of selfish desire and thus strives for the tranquility and integrity of the Void. Therefore its receptacle is always bright and there are no corners which are not illuminated: the left hand illuminates the left side while the right hand sheds light on the right. Thus no one can be deceived in situations of bright illumination. Brightness also means agility, a quality which helps one to react instantaneously to a myriad things and situations. If the opponent approaches from the left, you should immediately counter-attack leftward; if the opponent comes from the right, counter-attack to the right. So, as the saying goes, "Prevention is better than cure," or "Be ready for war to save peace." This is what hexagram Li (30) implies.

5. *Five-character a line verse dedicated to equilibrated hands movement of the Waving Hands posture*

Both hands move, passing in front of the central line:
The left hand alternates with the right one in rotation.
If you liken this gesture to the material world,
You'll get an image of a whirlpool with a centripetal force.
(In other words, the *Taiji* motif.)

6. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

One circle comes and one circle goes in rotation;
The mechanism of upper and lower parts works ceaselessly.
From antiquity the *Taiji* motif is as it is nowadays,
So is there any need to seek answers thoughtlessly outside the body?

Posture 45

SHAKE FOOT

Bai Jiao

The *Bai Jiao* posture requires you to lift up the right foot and hold it across at crotch level (or at the level of the right thigh's origin), with the right sole pointing north. Stretch the right arm rightward, while the left arm, bent at the elbow, follows the former to the right side, palms facing down. Thus both arms draw a horizontal curve southward (right) to tap the right toes with both palms.

Meanwhile, lift the right foot from its horizontal position with the sole pointing north, and swing it rightward and up, ankle joint partially flexed to meet the double slap of both hands midway, as if sweeping out the opponent's forearm with both hands and the right foot in a lotus-leg gesture. After slapping the right in-step, continuing moving both hands leftward in a horizontal curve. Stretch the left arm and bend the right elbow. At the same time, bend the right knee and drop the left foot down without touching the ground in the final movement.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

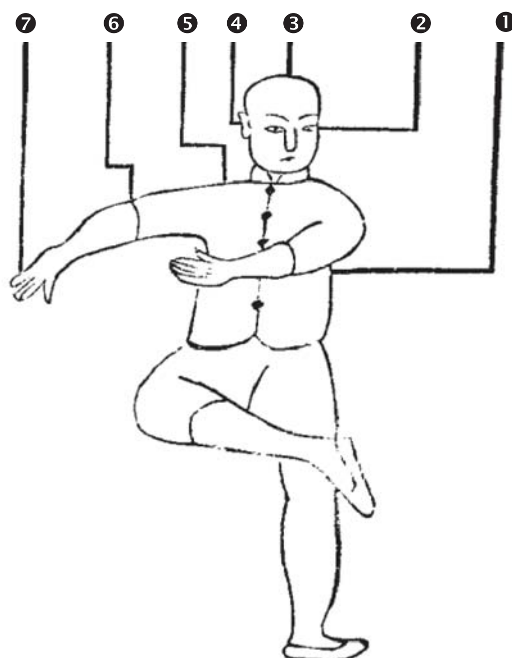


Fig. 3.45.1 Shake Foot

Inscriptions:

- ❶ bend the left elbow;
- ❷ look at the right foot;
- ❸ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;
- ❹ listen to the situation behind you;
- ❺ relax and drop the shoulders down;
- ❻ stretch out the right arm;
- ❼ face both palms down.

Place the right foot across the supporting left leg, with the right knee placed 7-8 cm forward; bend the left knee 2-3 cm. Flatten the left foot on the ground and shift the body weight onto the left leg; settle the left sole firmly into the ground. Bend the left knee slightly but don't loosen it. Move both hands slightly up to draw a curve from left to right, slapping the right in-step as the main gesture of the posture; the figure depicts the posture in front.

2. *General description*

Explanations to Fig. 3.45.1 give the flavor of the main features of the *Bai Jiao* posture. However, several additional details should also be mentioned:

When both hands move down toward the right foot as it moves upward, this produces a very narrow space between the two parts. The supporting left leg shifts a little to the right (2-3 cm) at the end of the lotus-leg gesture to dig into the ground after a very small hop. The left hand leads while the right hand moves up to the left first, then draws a small circle with a bent elbow. The left hand then drops down in front of the right arm, while the right hand follows the left hand, moving up in a large circle and stretching the right arm out to the right.

Both hands then move left to lure the opponent to further advance. After turning to the right, they deflect the opponent's attack first with the right hand, then make another turn back and leftward to parry the opponent's attack with the left hand. Put the right foot down at the right and withdraw to the left. If you try to kick with the right foot immediately without first withdrawing the foot left to close and accumulate strength, the kick will lack power.

Both hands counter-attack horizontally to the left and right. When doing the lotus-leg gesture by slapping on the right in-step, both hands and the right foot are placed above and only the supporting left leg remains below in the image of the 'oldest son', that is, as the reliable foundation stone which provides the steady and reliable strength of the family. If this stone is shaken, the entire construction is endangered and there will be no way to avoid defeat. To strengthen this foundation, I suggest you 'sit down' a little (2-3 cm) on the hip bone, bend the left knee about 1-2 cm, focus the energy at the top of your head to gather the body's energy to the chest area, and dig into the ground with the underside of the arch of your left foot. Also, hold your torso upright without deflecting from the sides or the front and back. Shift your body weight downward onto the left sole to build a naturally stable stance on that leg.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

a) Diagram of the starting and finishing positions of both hands in the Bai Jiao posture

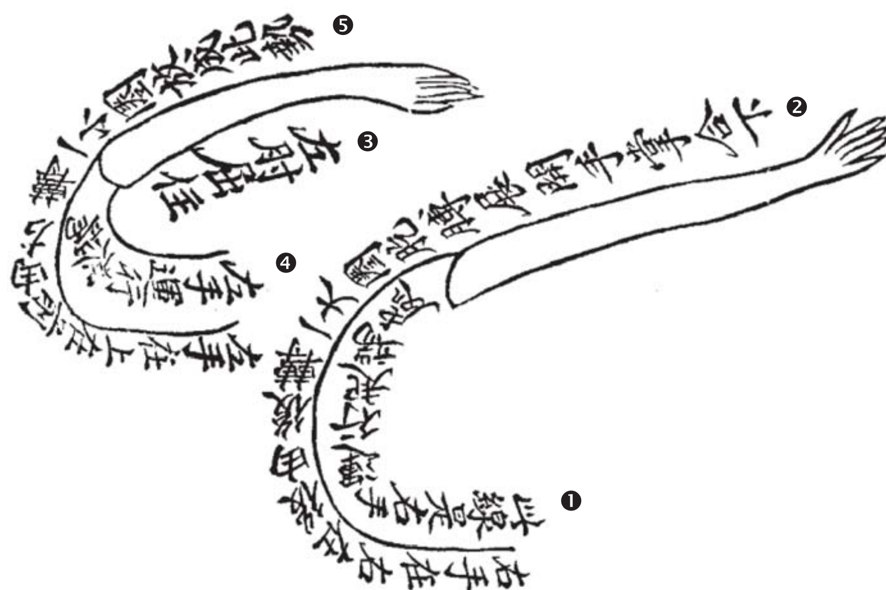


Fig. 3.45.2 Starting and finishing positions of both hands in Shake Foot (Bai Jiao)

Inscriptions:

❶ this line indicates the place of the right hand's movement from start to finish;

❷ the right hand is placed at the right and slightly behind the torso to draw a large circle by stretching the arm, palm facing down;

❸ the left hand is bent at the elbow;

❹ this is the place where the left hand's movement starts and finishes;

❺ the left hand is placed upward and forward to draw the small circle required in the posture.

b) Diagram of the position of both hands in the final movement of Bai Jiao

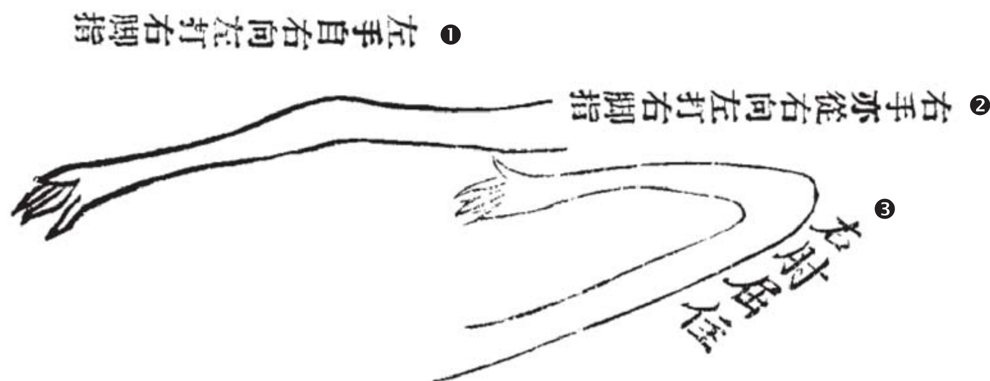


Fig. 3.45.3 Position of both hands in the final movement of Bai Jiao

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left hand slaps on the right toes horizontally from right to left;
- ❷ then the right hand slaps on the right toes horizontally from right to left as well;
- ❸ the right hand is bent at the elbow.

The current performance of *Bai Jiao* is noteworthy for its small differences with standard expressions of this posture. In both versions, the right foot lifts up when kicking the toes forward, then drops down and withdraws to the left. The standard version, however, has the right toes kicking forward in full lotus gesture with double hands slapping, whilst the current expression of *Bai Jiao* requires the right toes to kick forward in the semi-lotus gesture with a single hand slapping.

The left hand deflects the opponent's attack, while the right hand attracts the opponent to enter further. This is in fact the modernized version of the hands movement and one of changes applied in the modernized version *Taijiquan*.

As for the *Haoran zhi Qi*, it does not need to flow down the supporting left leg, which is already steady as a huge boulder lying midstream, immovable as Mount Dizhu.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The *Bai Jiao* posture resembles a mountain, which correlates with the hands. In this particular case both hands 'arrest' or stop the opponent's attack from the left and right sides. Hexagram Gen (52), a double mountain, denotes stopping or resting, and corresponds to the toes in the lower body. The lowest divided line of Gen (52) shows its subject "staying at rest before his toes start to move. There will be no error; but it will be advantageous for him to be consistently firm and correct," for he will not fail in what is correct, as the hexagram implies.

The fourth divided line of Gen shows its subject "staying at rest at the level of his upper trunk. There will be no error." This is because he keeps himself free from agitation and controls the situation. Once the foot is stable, the upper trunk or torso is unshakeable as well.

The topmost undivided line shows "the good fortune of the subject is due to his maintaining his restfulness devotedly", showing himself to be generous and good at his affairs to the very end. This means that the stable and strong sole of the supporting leg allows the upper trunk to be self-reliant and firm. Hence this posture is allocated to Gen (52).

At the same time, *Bai Jiao* also suggests the qualities embodied in hexagram Lu (56), the symbol of wandering and strange lands. Here we also have the attributes of quiet resting, and the trigram for mountain which is closely attached to that for fire, which runs all over the world. All this suggests the idea of desperation caused by a great fire on the way back after a long journey. This means that if a stranger (the opponent) comes from the left, he will fall to the right as a result of both your hands, just as a passing traveler has to return to close the journey once started; if the opponent comes from right, he falls to the left.

Furthermore, the body's weight shifts completely onto the supporting left leg while making the lotus leg swing to make the one-legged stance more stable and immovable, as reflected in the concept, "When you stop, you stop completely; when you move, you move totally." The second part of this con-

cept corresponds to the right leg moving up in the lotus-leg gesture. So how could a passing traveler not stay in this resting place for a while? This is why the current *Bai Jiao* posture is associated with hexagram Lu (56) as well.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the Bai Jiao Posture*

Verse 1

The trunk of a tree with many branches can be compared with a tower;
Standing on the left leg, cut across with lifted toes like a sword.
Deflect to the left and right with both hands after counter-attack;
First put down the deadly right foot and then bring it to life again.

Verse 2

To slap on the in-step of the Shaking Foot posture
Is quite a difficult gesture to perform;
A pair of hands and a one-legged stance
Strikes the opponent with terror.
He who knows the magical function of *Taiji*,
His hands resemble a balance
To bring everything to complete satisfaction.

6. *Free Verse*

One single thread moves the blood of the heart;
Your Magnificently Refined Energy flows in a circle.
If you want to name it, call it Consciousness,
And let the aggressors attack you from all around.
How come your hands and right leg
Strike across together simultaneously?
All around the affairs are running well.

Posture 46

CROUCH STEP LIKE A SNAKE CREEPING OUT FROM A HOUSE

Yi Tang She

The *Yi Tang She* posture requires the body to be lowered down with the left leg placed in front in a single crouch step, as illustrated in Fig. 3.46.1.

Sit back on the right leg and stretch the left leg out in front to form a left crouch step. If you go too low into a 'split', it will be difficult to rise from such a low position. Hence only the left leg is stretched forward, while the right leg, with knee placed forward, remains energetically connected to it. Stamp the right sole on the ground using strength, accumulating force for easier standing up afterwards.

The right ear listens to the situation on the right, while the right arm is stretched out, the right hand ready to draw ahead. The left hand draws forward and down from its position beside the right thigh. At the same time, the left leg stretches ahead in a slow rendition of the crouch step.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

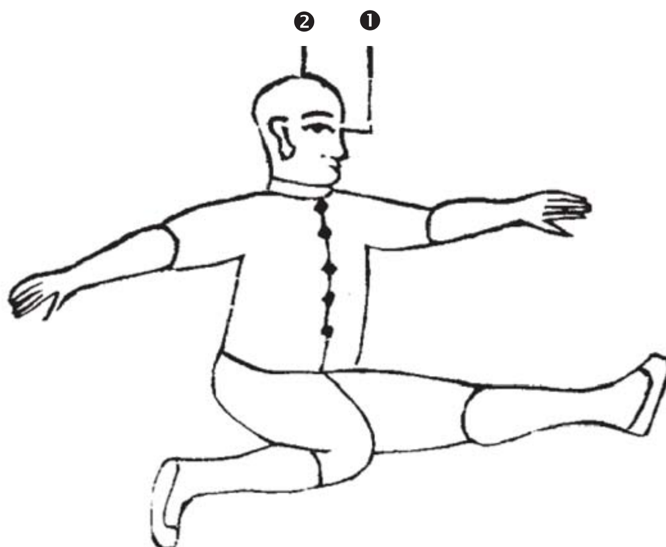


Fig. 3.46.1 Crouch Step Like a Snake Creeping out From a House (Yi Tang She)

Inscriptions:

❶ look straight ahead at the left hand and left foot;

❷ keep the energy focused at the top of the head.

Stretch the left leg and flatten it on the ground. Kick the opponent's shank powerfully with the left sole. Do not bend the left knee. The torso leans forward to accumulate energy in the front area. Bend the right knee but do not place it too much forward. Sit down on the hip bone but not too deeply so as to give the impression of a 'non-sitting' posture. Empty the right foot with the right in-step flattened on the ground, sole facing up.

2. *General description*

The *Bai Jiao* posture contrasts markedly with the preceding *Er Qi Jiao* posture in so far as the latter implies an airborne movement while the former involves crouching. Once they soar up, both legs of *Er Qi Jiao* have to land on the ground in a wide stance.

According to the strict codes of discipline and rules established by the ancient founders of the martial arts, after execution of *Bai Jiao*, the practitioner should bend the right elbow and extend the left arm, moving both hands to the left. Next, draw both hands in a curve downward then upward from the left side. At the same time, turn torso to the right, extending the right arm and bending the left elbow.

At the same time, sit on the right hip and push the left foot forward on the heel, stretching the left leg out completely to the southwest, toes pointing up, so that the leg resembles a new moon in its curved shape. At the same time, spread both arms out sideways: the left arm parallel to left leg, moving from its position by the right waist downward and southwest synchronously with the left leg. To ready the left foot to kick the opponent's shank with the sole, strengthen left toes and then the entire sole. Stretch the right arm backward and place it behind the torso with palm facing obliquely back. This is the structure within which the *Yi Tang She* posture operates.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

a) Diagram of the right leg's position



Fig. 3.46.2 Diagram of the right leg's position

Inscription:

- This is the path of the left leg pushed ahead on its heel.

While composing the posture, focus the energy at the top of the head and draw the heart power (*jing* essence) upward to make the right foot work in concert with the chest. Accumulate energy in the chest area and sit down on the hipbone, as if sitting on an empty place. Tuck in the right foot with sole facing up. The inside of the shank is 'empty' and not 'solid.'

b) Diagram of the left leg's position



❶

形之蹬伸腿左此 ❷

Fig. 3.46.3 Diagram of the left leg's position

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left foot moves ahead with strengthened heel;
- ❷ this is the path of the left leg stretching forward.

b) Additional diagram of the left leg



Fig. 3.46.4 Diagram of the left leg's position

Inscription:

- Taking the crouching step with the left leg, the whole body's force is concentrated on the left kick with the sole.

This posture requires that the left foot moves forward to kick the opponent's shank with the heel and/or sole, so the left heel must be completely strengthened. The function of the parallel left arm is to stimulate or assist the left foot's kick, aided by the position of the right arm behind the torso.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

Although *Yi Tang She* is aimed at inflicting harm on the opponent's shank and involves sitting down on the hipbone with feet firmly flattened on the ground, this posture is still unusually low and calls to mind the double water of Kan (29), the symbol of sinking and total peril. Appearing consecutively, Kan (29) signifies one perilous situation following another, but also the entering into a cavern within this danger, as water is naturally wont to do, so as not to cause blockage or overflow. Hence water pursues its way through a dangerous situation without losing its true nature, just as sincerity in the core of the heart is never lost. It is said that, "action in accordance with this will be of high value." This means that even if you cannot advance advantageously while the mind is not sufficiently single-minded or all-embracing, you can still apply the principle of *Taiji* with sincerity, by pursuing the course of the Golden Mean, navigating between disaster and good fortune, advantages and disadvantages, gain and loss, and the other unforeseen consequence. So, only by the flow of Magnificently Refined Energy can you maintain safety on an isle of security where water is unable to overflow. In this way, a person who enters a cavern of peril can emerge safely.

Hence there will be no error in the *Yi Tang She* posture, which is performed in the image of the double peril and hence allocated to Kan (52). The human body has two legs that enable a steady stance on the ground, and two hands to protect itself from any opponent's attack. Once the *Yi Tang She* posture is taken, the whole body enters into double peril, a situation of difficulty.

The hexagram from the Book of Changes formed by the trigram representing mountain below (symbol of stopping) and water above (symbol of peril) is called Jian (39), the symbol of a lame man and difficulty. In the state indicated by Jian (39), disadvantage will be found in retreating to the northeast, the location of *Gen* (mountain) and *Kan* (water) according to arrangement of King Wen. Conversely, the advantage will be found by advancing southwest. Hence the *Yi Tang She* posture is taken in the south-

westerly direction to find good fortune. This means that kicking with the left sole will bring success.

The second divided line of Jian (39) shows the loyal minister of the king "struggling with difficulty after difficulty." This proves that all his efforts will ultimately be rewarded due to his correct position in the center of trigram *Gen*, while the king resides in the fifth position above, in the center of the upper figure *Kan*. Hence both thighs and arms correlate with the central places of the upper *Kan*, the king, and the lower *Gen*, the loyal minister who struggles with difficulty upon difficulty without a view to his own advantage. This means that the situation is difficult but not totally fatal, just as when an opponent attacks at less than full capacity. Therefore you perform *Yi Tang She* without a view to your own advantage.

Thus the king from his fifth place descends by taking the lower position and kicking with the left sole with absolute selflessness, that is, with the required strength, as the situation is close to crisis. Hence the posture is allocated to Jian (39), whose third undivided line shows its subject "advancing, but only toward greater difficulties. He returns to his former associates." The two divided lines represented in the inner trigram *Gen*, rejoice in him. Then the fourth divided line shows its subject "advancing, but only to greater difficulties. Thus he comes back, and unites with the subject of the third line below." On returning to its proper place, this line now has a solidity due its position, which implies the left foot working in concert with the forces of the right leg, both hands and the whole body to overcome the difficulties of situation. A unified force strengthens the troops many times over. As King Wu states, "Granted with three thousand ministers and advisors, still you are framed with a single mind of your Self."

Although hexagram Jian (39) represents difficulties, you have to step over the dangers as if crossing the border of a strange land. Hence the fifth undivided line of Jian (39) shows its subject (the ruler) "struggling with the greatest difficulties, while his friend (the loyal minister) comes to help him," for the friend is in the Golden Mean and possesses the requisite virtues. This means that only through intensive concentration of the whole

body's force and spirit can hardships be surmounted. The topmost divided line shows its subject "going forward, only to increase in difficulties."

This means that there is an opportunity to 'strike while the iron is hot' and overcome your problems by stimulating the regeneration of *Zheng-qi* and strengthening yourself in the state indicated by Jian (39). Again, even if your strength is already exhausted by difficulties, you should find force and spirit within yourself to overcome barriers and arrive in the tumultuous battlefield to gain a final brilliant victory. This is what is called "going forward to increase the difficulties" of the opponent through "fighting fire with fire." Generally speaking, this is the objective of the *Yi Tang She* posture, that is, that you should demonstrate your *gong-fu* to cope with difficulties. Such a skill can be possessed only through experience and by encountering hardship in practice. This is how hexagram Jian (39) derives its meaning.

Another hexagram, Ming Yi (36), is formed by the trigram for earth and that of brightness entering into its midst (fire, sun). Symbolizing the solar eclipse and the appearance of a clear intelligence, Ming Yi represents a brightness wounded or obscured by darkness. So it is said that, "It will be advantageous to realize the difficulty of the position and, by maintaining one's firm correctness, keep back for a while." The lowest undivided line of Ming Yi shows its subject "as a wounded bird flying, but with drooping wings." This means that the *Yi Tang She* posture within the condition of Ming Yi resembles a bird with drooping wings.

The second divided line shows its subject "wounded only in the left thigh." This suggests that the left leg should be completely extended in front. "It is advantageous for him to save himself by the strength of a swift horse, and thus there will be good fortune." This means that if the *Yi Tang She* posture cannot be taken effectively, there will be no chance to escape the difficulties in the circumstances indicated by Ming Yi.

The third undivided line shows its subject "hunting in the south. He should not be eager to make everything correct at once." According to arrangement of King Wen, the inner trigram *Li* (fire) represents the south, while the

outer trigram *Kun* (earth) the southwest. So, taking a crouch step southwest means to succeed against the opponent and "take the head of the great chief of darkness." This objective is represented by the phrase, "hunting in the south", hence signaling that a great achievement will be accomplished immediately.

The fourth divided line shows that its subject "has just entered into the belly of the degenerate terminator." This means that the left foot kicks the aggressor at a painful place, hitting the origin of his motivation to attack you. Hence you are still able to carry out your intention to unmask the aggressor, "quitting the gate and courtyard of the ruinous house." This means that if you succeed in obtaining correct information or knowledge despite the difficulties of overcoming the conditions, you will win one hundred battles one hundred times. It is said that, "the case of King Wen is that of one who with these qualities was yet involved in great difficulties." Hence the *Yi Tang She* posture is also allocated to Ming Yi (36).

Hexagram *Kan* (29), Jian (39) and Ming Yi (36) are complex forms to be depicted visually. One needs to cultivate great capacities of virtue to fill them with their conditions and cases. If scale of movement is not a factor, then the *Yi Tang She* posture must be considered the most difficult in the whole routine, requiring intensive *gong-fu* practice and extensive experience. Nonetheless, one kicking gesture certainly cannot beget victory, and in fact, it is not a good idea to make things difficult directly or indirectly, and yet be unable to flee during pressing times.

5. *Five-character a line verse dedicated to Yi Tang She*

The right foot swings up in the lotus-leg movement,
The left foot threads its way downward, brushing the ground
Toward the southwest in kicking the opponent's shank,
As an immediate counter-attack, do it in one go.

Hold the back like a drawn bow and move downward with power of *jing* essence in the shape of a new moon. The left hand moves downward and forward synchronously with the left leg to kick with the left heel and sole. After taking the crouch step, move the left hand upward. The downward movement indicates the beginning, while the upward movement denotes the posture's end. This means that without the end of a preceding form the following one cannot commence.

6. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to Yi Tang She*

Verse 1

Bluff upward but strike downward —
This is what a noble man must bear in mind;
Take a left crouch step to kick with the sole
With a view to your own advantage.
Sit on the right hip and tuck in the right shin,
Dusting in the ground;
As the ancient tree which entwines its roots,
Take the lowest position in the center of the interlacing.

Verse 2

The right lotus leg swing — it's almost impossible to surmise,
As well as a slap with a pair of wings, leaving no dust behind.
If there is no way to apply a shoulder or elbow stroke,
A kick with the heel or sole is effective to invert the phoenix tower.

Verse 3

The transformations of *yin* and *yang* are endless indeed;
It is just said that it is great to encounter a good man
Who acts without a view to his own advantage.
But who can take advantage of the brilliant chance?
It's almost impossible to pre-determine. So I suggest you
take a crouch step to save yourself from embarrassment.

Verse 4

If you really want to be good at *Taijiquan*, study it with great care
To be rescued unexpectedly from desperate situations in the best way.
Everyone under heaven seems to be like this: just yesterday
One started to learn the martial arts to demonstrate these skills today.

Verse 5

A thread of Magnificently Refined Energy flows downward;
Sitting in the center of the semi-lotus posture,
You can be in command and manage all the four extremities.
This body is still like a hot iron — just cast it on the ground
And you will hear the metal and stone clang.

Posture 47

GOLDEN ROOSTER STANDS ON ONE LEG

Jin Ji Du Li

The name of this posture indicates that it must be performed on the supporting left leg, while the right knee rises to kick forward. At the same time, the right hand lifts up in imitation of a fighting rooster spreading its wings. If you cannot reach the opponent when putting your right knee forward, use your right foot to kick him at his lower body.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

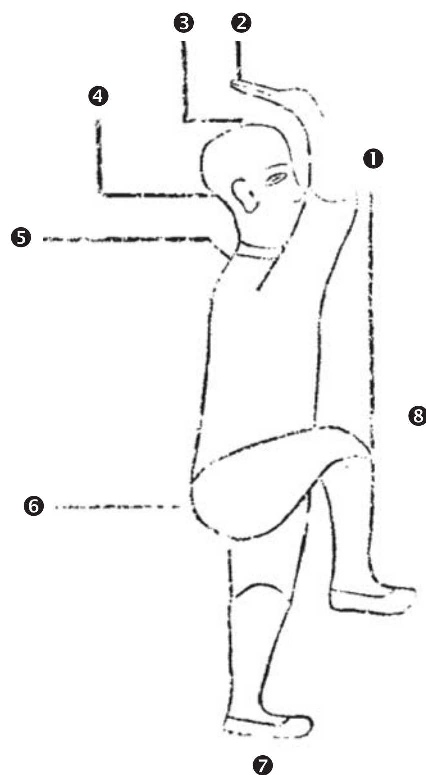


Fig. 3.47.1 Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg (Jin Ji Du Li)

Inscription:

❶ raise the right knee suddenly and move up it synchronously with the right hand until it stops at the level of the top of the head, palm facing up;

❷ the right hand moves up until it stops at the level of the crown of the head, palm facing up;

❸ focus the energy at the top of the head, which is connected with *Zhong-qi* drawing upward;

❹ use your ears to listen to the situation behind your body, and not your eyes, which can only see what is happening in front;

❺ relax both shoulders;

❻ keep the right toes pointed up;

❼ flatten the left sole on the ground;

❽ hang the left hand downward like a mallet.

2. *General description*

After completion of *Yi Tang She*, lift your body up by rising on the left leg and digging into the ground with the left toes and heel. When upright, lift the right knee and toes in a single move. Take a firm stance with both legs. At the same time, use *jing* energy accumulated at the top of the head to draw both arms forward and to guide the crotch energy as it rises. Thus all four limbs are connected through one strengthening upward movement.

While standing up, lean the torso slightly forward and dig the right heel into the ground. When the right foot lifts off the ground, the left hand moves slowly upward until it reaches the level of the ears, so as to send arm energy through the left shoulder then back down to the left heel, while taking its position beside the left ribs, palm facing obliquely down.

When the left hand passes in front of the left nipple, the right hand lifts up, palm facing down, until it comes to the same level as the left hand. Then, without stopping, the right hand continues moving upward until it comes

to a rest above the head, palm facing the sky. The right knee moves up and forward in concert with the energy of the lower abdomen. Meanwhile, the left hand takes a lower position beside the left hip, while the right palm lifts up to strike the opponent on the chin at acupoint Cheng-jiang (located under the lower lip). The right knee is placed in readiness to hook upward into the opponent's left kidney. Hence this technique is used to strike directly at the two vulnerable areas of the opponent's body. Do not assume this posture is easy. Stand on your supporting left leg which should be steadfast as a mountain and shoot your right palm upward to break the sky into pieces.

3. *Diagram of the right palm's movement*

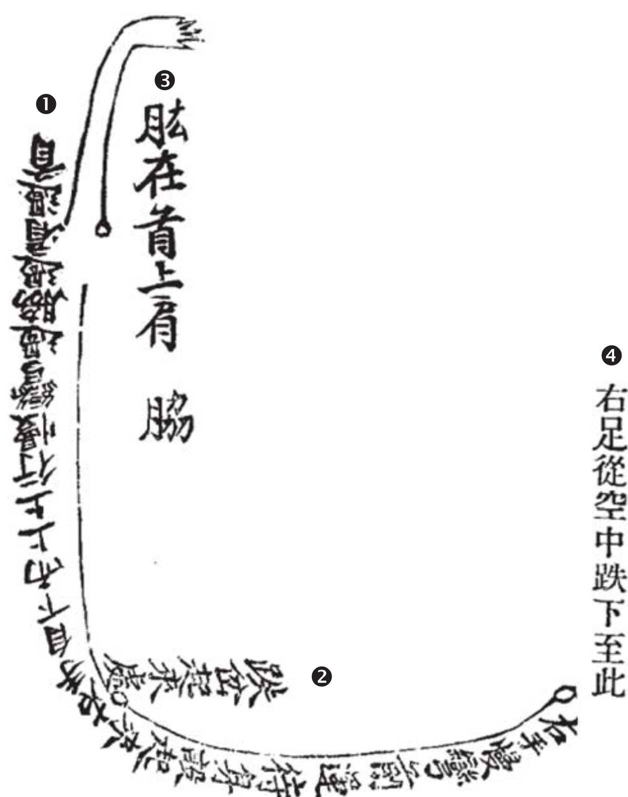


Fig. 3.47.2 Diagram of the right palm's movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ Passing beside the right ribs and shoulder, the right arm takes its position at the level of the head. Meanwhile slightly lift the body by stretching the supporting left leg;
- ❷ The location of the supporting foot after completion of the preceding *Yi Tang She* posture;
- ❸ Bend the right arm slowly at the elbow and move it up and slightly forward while the body stands on the supporting left leg;
- ❹ After kicking with the right knee, put the right foot down at this place.

4. *Diagram of the left hand's movement*

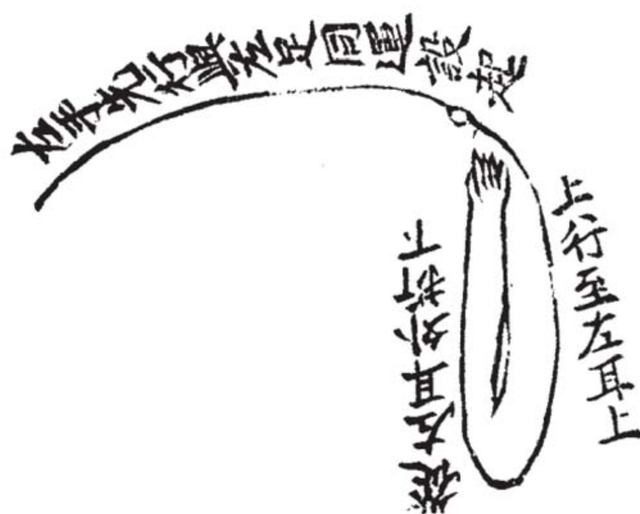


Fig. 3.47.3 Diagram of the left hand's movement

Inscriptions :

- The left arm first moves synchronously with the left leg as it stands up to support the whole body. Then it stops in front of the left ear, to descend again.

5. *Diagram of the right knee*



Fig. 3.47.4 Diagram of the right knee

Inscription:

- Lift the right knee up and forward.

6. *Diagram of the left leg*



Fig. 3.47.5 Diagram of the left leg

Inscriptions:

❶ bend the left knee and do not loosen it too much;
❷ flatten the left sole on the ground;
❸ keep the supporting left leg in a solid and firm stance.

7. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

According to the doctrine of *yin* and *yang*, the right hand is associated with *yang* and the sun, while the left hand relates to *yin* and the moon. Figure *Kun* (earth) corresponds to the abdomen, the side from which the right hand moves up until it stops above the head, palm facing the sky.

The right hand hits the opponent on the chin in the image of hexagram Jin (35), symbol of forwardness and quick promotion. The right hand above the head shows the subject of Jin advancing his horns, that is, up in arms. Figure *Li* is allocated to fire, whose nature is always to flame up. So the right hand moves up synchronously with the right knee in the image of fire, which lifts up until it burns everything to ashes.

Hexagram Jin (35) is comprised of the earth trigram and that of brightness, that is, fire or the sun, emanating above it. The explanation for the entire figure states that, "Jin denotes advancement and quick promotion," which corresponds to the right hand's movement up. Hence the *Jin Ji Du Li* posture is allocated to Jin.

The hexagram formed by fire under a mountain is named Bi (22), the symbol of decoration, rank or distinguishing badge. The right hand corresponds to mountain, that is, a lofty peak towering over all other mountains. The second divided line of Bi (22) shows the subjecting "adorning one's lower lip with a beard." This denotes that the right hand can strike to the opponent's chin (beard) on the way to its position above the head to take the king's superior position without a word. The lowest undivided line of Bi (22) shows the subject "adorning one's feet." This means that the left foot bears the load of the whole body. Since the inner trigram represents

the brightness of the sun, there is not a thing under the sky which remains unlit. Hence the *Jin Ji Du Li* posture is associated with Bi (22).

The state of things implied by the *Jin Ji Du Li* posture indicates that danger has been overcome successfully. As the saying goes, "Out of the depths of misfortune comes bliss," meaning that the darkest hour is before dawn and "in seven days he will return and repeat his proper course." The Fu hexagram (24), symbol of return and reconstruction, is formed by the trigram representing earth and that for thunder in its midst. Earth is associated with the abdomen, while thunder correlates with movement and the feet, and in this particular case, with the raised right knee until it stops at abdomen level, a move which resembles thunderstorms and lightning. This is why it is said that "the subject of the figure moves right into the center among those represented by other weak lines, and yet returns alone to his proper path," due to his pure mind and righteous pursuits. Thus the subject of this posture can overcome dangers by herself and return to condition of peace and tranquility of the pure land, which reigned in the world before the last *Bai Jiao* posture.

The supporting right leg in the *Yi Tang She* posture shares its lower position on the ground with the left leg, until the left leg becomes the supporting one in the Golden Rooster's single leg stance. Thus the left leg returns to its previous role of the supporting leg in the *Bai Jiao* posture. After the right foot performs the lotus-leg gesture, it tucks its shank into a semi-lotus posture, its right knee digging into the ground until the Golden Rooster stance returns it once more to its forward position at the abdomen level. In other words, you can escape peril and difficulty by using your knees to hurt opponents in painful areas, thus reflecting the earlier saying, "Out of the depths of misfortune comes bliss." This means that you have to fight fire with fire so that "in seven days you will return and repeat your proper course" of benevolence, which will be boundless great achievements. Similarly, the natural course of *Taijiquan* is without boundaries in so far as the end always returns to the beginning. This is the principle of returning, which is so brilliantly explained by Fu (24), the hexagram associated with the *Jin Ji Du Li* posture.

8. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

Shoot high up to touch the sky with the right palm,
While the left hand is hanging like a bud of jade lotus.
The Golden Rooster also stands on one leg,
As there is no way to defend from the right knee
Which hangs stealthily in the darkness.

Verse 2

The golden snake creeps out from the jade house;
Suddenly it soars from the ground like a hawk on a wing.
It is said that the right hand strikes up,
But who knows how difficult it is
To defend oneself against an attack by the right knee!

9. *Internal power (nei jing)*

The movements of *Jin Ji Du Li* assume that the right side of the body executes the active moves while the left side remains at rest. In other words, this posture is supported by the power of the left side, while the movement of the right side springs from right side's source of power. Hence the right side prevails here.

Starting from the preceding *Yi Tang She* posture, the energy of the right hand issues from the right leg, then rises up through the right ribs to the armpit, along the elbow to the fingers, then it turns to the back of the hand, rising back up the elbow and shoulder, then finally down to the right heel. The power of the right leg is situated at the toes and rises up to the knee. Meanwhile, *Zhong-qi* issues from the Dan-tian and rises to the top of the head, whereupon it flows down to the nape to acupoint Nao-hou, then along the spine to acupoint Zhang-qiang in the tailbone. Due to the synchronous movements of the arms and legs, *Zhong-qi* circulates as a cohesive

substance uniting all the body movements, so that they cannot be divided into initial or later parts, nor first or second sequences.

The energy of the left hand is generated in the left leg, and is delivered up to the left ear. From there it flows down, passing through the shoulder and left arm until it reaches the left buttock, then acupoint Wei-zhong situated at the midpoint of the back of the knee, then running finally downward back to the left heel.

Set the right foot down steadfastly on the ground. Do not let the body lean sideways or back and forth. Apply internal power to stabilize the stance naturally, with the left hand now touching the sky and the left knee at abdomen level, duplicating the right side's movement in the subsequent posture called Raise Lamp Toward Heaven (*Chao Tian Deng*).

Posture 48

RAISE LAMP TOWARD HEAVEN

Chao Tian Deng

The name of this posture is derived from the stance of the left hand which can be likened to holding a lamp and lifted it up with palm facing the sky. If you cannot reach the opponent by putting your left knee forward, use your left foot to kick him at the lower body.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

The waist area demarcates the upper and lower body. When energy of the right hand and right knee flows up and that of the left hand and left knee flows down, they are kept separate at the waist level, which plays the role of dividing line.

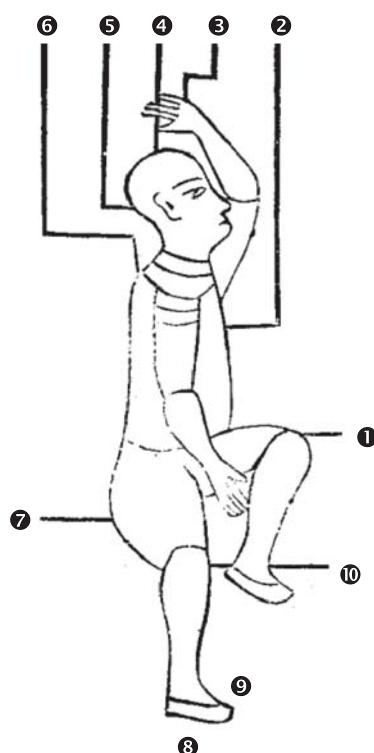


Fig. 3.48.1 Raise Lamp Toward Heaven (Chao Tian Deng)

Inscriptions:

❶ raise the left knee up high;
❷ fill the chest with energy;
❸ lift the left hand until it stops at the level of crown of the head, palm facing up;
❹ focus the energy at the top of the head;
❺ listen to the situation behind you;
❻ relax the hand and let the right shoulder hang down;
❼ bend the right knee slightly (1-2 cm);
❽ flatten the right sole completely and press it into the ground;
❾ shift the body weight onto the supporting right leg; hold the torso upright, but do not loosen it too much;
❿ drop the right hand down beside the right hip.

2. *General description*

When the right palm takes its position above the head, *qi* energy flows to the back of the hand, down to the right shoulder, then straight to the right heel. Then it passes through acupoint Yong-quan and reaches Da-dun and Yin-bai before drawing a full circle. This is how *jing* essence circulates properly throughout the body, its flow generated and driven by the practitioner's mind/heart until it reaches the right hand, before being transmitted separately to the thumb and the right shoulder. The energy then flows from the front of the shoulder down to the right ribs, to the right thigh, then further down to the toes to hang there like a mallet.

Drop the right foot down and, point the toes northwest without touching the ground. Then place the right heel on the ground about 35-45 cm away from the left foot.

Bend the left hand slowly and move it forward from its position beside the left hip. Pass the left hand in front of the abdomen and ribs from the left

side, until it reaches shoulder level, up to the left ear and the left part of the forehead. Extend the left arm and place the left hand above the head, palm up. Meanwhile, lift the left knee up to lower abdomen level and kick the knee forward.

If you ask me about the similarities and differences between the right and left styles of standing on one leg, and why both hands are raised alternately rather than simultaneously, I would say that in this particular case, it is not possible to lift both hands together, nor raise both legs simultaneously, if the principles of vertical energy flows are to be abided. This is because heart *qi* in the *Chao Tian Deng* posture flows upward to accumulate the whole body's *qi* energy in the chest area, resulting in a lack of process to distribute free and unrestrained energy to all four limbs. Hence although the left foot is lifted up to the level of the upper body, the left hand cannot be channeled with enough strength, and as long as strength cannot be accumulated in left palm, then the lower body cannot accumulate strength in both knees.

So by following the commands of the mind/heart, each limb moves slowly within the prescribed moves of the right and left styles. This is why the entire posture is divided into two styles: when the supporting left side digs into the ground, the force and strength of the right half flows economically throughout the whole body; when the right foot stamps on the ground, the strength and power of the left half also circulates throughout the body in an efficient mode. Hence the method of alternate, rather than simultaneous, movements between the left and right are used here. In this way, you can never be entrapped in peril nor experience tribulations, since your movements are free from deflections and deceptions. All practitioners should know how this mechanism of movement works. So I say to you, "Even if you are not able to learn these things, at least consider them carefully."

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

a) Diagram of the right hand's movement

Passing in front of the head and right ribs, the right hand drops slowly down until it hangs beside the right thigh.

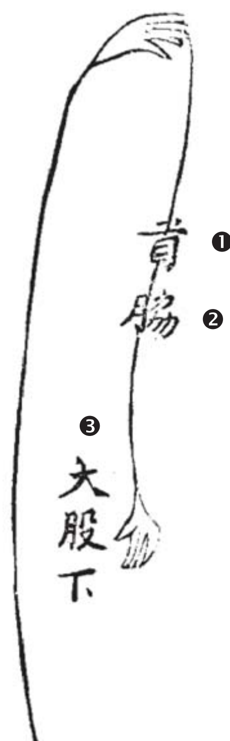


Fig. 3.48.2 Diagram of the right hand's movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ head;
- ❷ ribs;
- ❸ thigh.

b) Diagram of the left leg



Fig. 3.48.3 Diagram of the left leg

Inscription:

- Stand on the supporting left leg as described earlier.

If you previously faced southwest, now face northwest. In the preceding *Jin Ji Du Li* posture, the leading roles were played by the right hand and right knee; for the current *Chao Tian Deng* posture, the left half of the body leads.

c) Diagram of the left hand's movement

The *Chao Tian Deng* or Raise Lamp Toward Heaven posture supposes that the left hand plays the leading role, using its strengthened palm to face the sky.

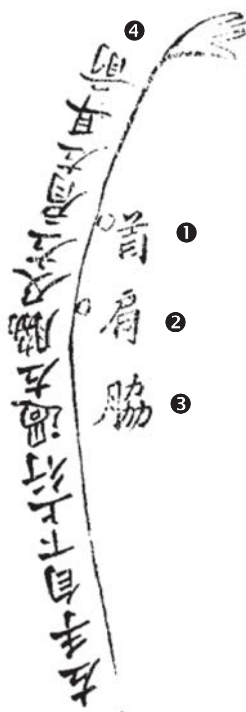


Fig. 3.48.4 Diagram of the left hand's movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ head;
- ❷ shoulder;
- ❸ ribs;
- ❹ lift the left hand up, passing it in front of the left ribs, the shoulder and left ear until it takes a position above the head.

d) Diagram of the left leg movement



Fig. 3.48.5 Diagram of the left leg

Inscriptions:

- ❶ lift the strengthened knee upward and forward, mirroring the preceding movements of the right side;
- ❷ bend the left leg at the knee;
- ❸ the left leg plays the main role of Host in this posture.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The preceding *Jin Ji Du Li* posture involves standing up after completion of *Yi Tang She* (Crouch Step). In standing up, you attack the opponent at the upper body, as opposed to the previous attack to the lower body. This is quite a difficult transitional move in the face of successive challenges, all of which require solid experience and *gong-fu* to surmount. Because practitioners tend to use their right hand and leg more often than their left limbs in movements, the latter tend to remain comparatively under-developed. As such, the current *Chao Tian Deng* posture, that is, the left style of the one leg stance, is seen to be more difficult to perform than the preceding *Jin Ji Du Li* or right style of the one leg stance. This is why *Jin Ji Du Li* (right leg) is followed by the more difficult *Chao Tian Deng* (left leg), and

not vice versa. By executing the easier right style first, your confidence in defeating the opponent is increased, and the left style is used as a backup to 'finish' the fight and secure final victory. From this perspective, the preceding *Yi Tang She* posture is allocated to hexagram Pi (12), the symbol of closing and troubled times, which, if pushed to to the extreme, can reverse the situation.

Hence *Yi Tang She* is followed by the *Jin Ji Du Li*, then by *Chao Tian Deng* in the image of Tai (11), the symbol of flourishing, peace and success. The latter two postures are actually right and left styles of the same posture. Symbolically speaking, we can say that current the *Chao Tian Deng* posture represents the condition of hexagram Tai (11) brought to extremity, that is, the 'refinement' of success gained by the Golden Rooster (of *Jin Ji Du Li*). Therefore *Chao Tian Deng* corresponds to hexagram Tai (11).

Hexagram Tai (11) comprises of the trigrams for heaven and earth in communication together. According to the principle of circulation, heaven and earth replace each other in their upper and lower positions, so the condition of extreme Pi (12) cannot be repeated here, but only through the conditions indicated by Tai (11) which occurs in-between Pi's extremes. In fact, Tai (11) will certainly develop to it extreme to give way to Pi (12). If so, it is inevitable that the extreme manifestation of Tai (11) will be transformed into Pi (12) to re-commence the process from the beginning, which is in fact both the beginning and the end. Although heaven and earth cannot divert from their natural paths, the practitioner can however avert trouble by using special martial arts techniques. Although you may prefer to be remain the safe side and in an advantageous position, the conditions indicated by Pi (12) can strengthen your mind/heart to transform your position into one of firmness and correctness. As for Pi (12), it is also developed and thus cannot be insurmountable for Tai (11). If you can keep the conditions indicated by Tai (11) full but not overflowing for a short period, the proportion of Tai (11) and Pi (12) will be most advantageous for you[13]. Martial arts students should know this.

[13] Translator's note: the point is to remain in the condition of Tai (12) longer than Pi (11) so as to harvest the advantages of being in full control of a situation.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the Chao Tian Deng Posture*

Verse 1

This time the left palm is lifted to heaven again;
Meanwhile, the left knee culminates forward in a kicking trick.
Still, the technique is divided into left and right styles
Causing the poor opponent to forget his whip for a long while.

Verse 2

Drop the right foot and lift the left one;
Raise the left palm, as if lighting the way to heaven with a lamp.
Thus you declare yourself a person of great ability
By echoing the laughter of the Golden Rooster.

Verse 3

If the right knee didn't convince the opponent
With an unexpected kick to his crotch,
The left thigh will certainly redouble the effect.
Refuse to give up until all force is gone;
Such an approach evokes the admiration of people.

Verse 4

When teeth and chin are not closed together,
Beware of a palm strike coming up from below.
Madness wants to know nothing
About the tribulations it is fraught;
To arrange a one-day schedule means
To waste all three meals.

Posture 49

PRECIOUS PEARL ROLLED BACK INTO CURTAIN

Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian

Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian is similar to the *Dao Juan Hong* posture described earlier in volume two of this book, hence it is performed under these two names. In fact, *Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian* looks similar to the *Ye Ma Fen Zong* posture, but is orientated in the opposite direction. Hence the former is applied for retreat, while the latter for advancing.

After completing the left side movements by drawing the left arm forward, turn the head backward to look at the right hand, which is lowered beside the right thigh, above the right knee.

1. *Diagram of the posture*



Fig. 3.49.1 Precious Pearl Rolled Back into Curtain (Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian)

Inscriptions:

❶ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;

❷ sink the waist power (*jing* essence) downward;

❸ bend the right leg at the strengthened knee; press the right sole on the ground.

Look at the hand in front; keep your eyes on the hand as it moves from front to back. The crotch must be opened; empty the Bai-hui and make the lower abdomen solid. Hold your hands as if drawing something toward you. Stretch the left leg until the left foot feels comfortable and completely flattened on the ground. Dig the left toes into the ground.

2. General description

The *Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian* posture belongs to the group of large-scale body movements, and is the most difficult posture in this category.

After completing the preceding *Chao Tian Deng* posture, the left hand moves down and backward until it stops beside the left hip above the left knee, palm down and fingers pointing obliquely forward. At the same time, drop the left foot down, and without touching the ground, bring it beside the right foot, taking a wide curved step backward in retreat. If the opponent comes from the right to attack your rear, take a wide step backward with your right foot and set the right heel on the ground first, slowly flattening the sole until the right toes dig into the ground. At the same time, draw the right hand backward to parry with your right forearm, palm down and fingers pointing obliquely forward, until it stops beside the right hip above the left knee, whereupon the right foot takes a step back. Look at the right hand. Keep your torso upright and the waist and hips relaxed. If the opponent attacks from the left again, repeat the first backward step with the left foot.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

a) Diagram of the right hand's movement

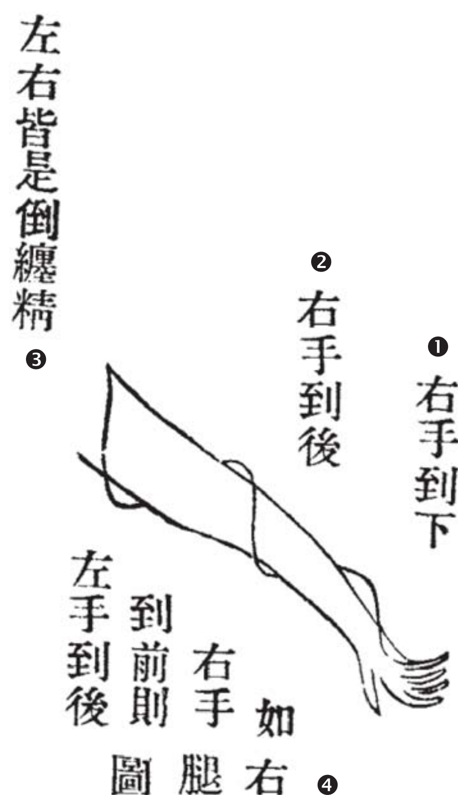


Fig. 3.49.2 The right hand's movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the right hand moves down;
- ❷ the right hand moves backward;
- ❸ when the right hand moves forward, the left hand moves backward;
- ❹ both hands apply the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration in reverse movement.

b) Diagram of the left hand's movement

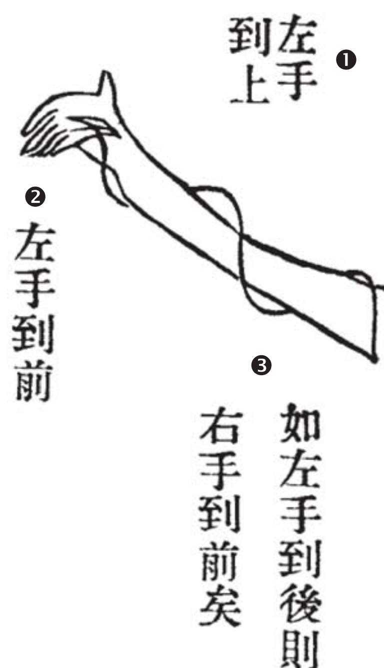


Fig. 3.49.3 The left hand's movement

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left hand moves up;
- ❷ the left hand moves forward;
- ❸ when the left hand moves backward, the right hand moves forward.

Both legs apply the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration through inward rotation, which is known as 'reverse movement in a circle.'

c) Diagram of the right and left legs' movements



Fig. 3.49.4 Movement of the right and left legs

Inscriptions:

❶ when the right leg is placed behind, the left leg remains in front;

❷ when the right leg is placed in front, the left leg moves behind;

❸ when the left leg moves behind, the right leg is placed in front;

❹ when the left leg is placed in front, the right leg is placed behind.

4. Symbolic meaning of the posture

Since the *Dao Juan Hong* posture in volume two of this book is allocated to the image of *Kun* (earth), its very close cousin, *Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian*, also corresponds with the earthly Kun.

To elaborate on the preceding description of *Dao Juan Hong*, we should note that for *Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian*, both hands and legs perform the reverse rotation while retreating completely in the image of figure *Kun* (2), the symbol of submissive officials and earth, as implied by its division of all six lines which denote weakness and full retreat. If the subject does not retreat in the conditions indicated by Kun (2), she becomes nervous and frightened. Thus it is said that troops which can advance to attack the enemy must advance, and if they cannot, they must defend themselves in retreat. Both strategies are difficult to achieve. So a person who can defend herself in retreat will be able to build the basis for advancing.

Hence *Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian* is recognized as one of the most complicated postures — not because you do not wish to advance to gain victory, but because there are a thousand knights and ten thousand horsemen and swordsmen very close in front of you, closing off any opportunities for advance as well as retreat. Your only resort under such conditions is to whirl both arms, attacking with your front hand to drive away the swordsmen, and counter-attacking the dense rows of aggressors with your rear hand by sweeping their swords aside and downward, so forcing them to reseal their broken lines to re-attack in the future. In this way, you gain the chance to defeat a myriad unnamed enemies 'with a single arrow,' smashing their faces and temples, breaking their noses and so on. This is indeed the object of retreating in attack — to defeat the enemy.

The whole point is to provoke the opponent's anxiety and dread, even at one's own risk, and in this sense, the posture correlates with earth. At the same time, earth also connotes obedience and docility, though only after a period of time, since following someone or something means to forget oneself in order to become one with the leader. This is a process requiring

time and time determines the mode of retreat — a properly performed retreat unfolds smoothly. Smooth flow is an attribute of earth, so under the conditions indicated by hexagram Kun (2), any kind of retreat will lead to success, including the *Dao Juan Hong* (or *Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian*) posture, which will enjoy good fortune.

A posture, if not aimed at advancing, should definitely be used retreat. To retreat means to move carefully and softly, as softness is an attribute of earth. As the saying goes, "softness always conquers hardness," so in a sense, retreating means to advance in harmony with earth's qualities. When earth has intercourse with heaven, the symbol of health and strength, it brings forth its strongest qualities — softness and movement[14].

Hence *Taijiquan* looks smooth and soft but is, in actual fact, solid and strong in nature. The bottom line of trigram *Kun* (earth) moves to change into *Zhen* (thunder), symbol of retreating feet and movement. *Zhen* has intercourse with *Xun* (wind), symbol of advancement and the source and reason for retreat. In the martial arts there is no demarcation to determine the time for advance or retreat. If you can advance, just advance, if you can retreat, then just retreat. It's that simple. In both cases, keep your eyes alert to the front, back and all sides to prevent unexpected attacks from any angle.

Xun is actually trigram *Gen* (mountain) inversed. *Gen* corresponds to the hands, and with the hands you can stop the opponent or deflect his attack by rotating your arms repeatedly without being harmed. By alternating your arms, the left and right parts of the body are linked in the entire movement, so there is no distinction between the beginning and end. If this thread of internal power becomes broken, it must be reconnected immediately to keep energy circulating.

[14] *Translator's note*: just as *yin* and *yang* in the *Taiji* motif are inseparable and form a unit, so withdrawal and attack must always exist close to each other. Withdrawal without attack is too weak, too *yin*. Attack without withdrawal becomes awkward in action or too *yang*. Either extreme is not recommended in *Taijiquan*.

The moving line in the center of *Kun* transforms the figure to *Kan* (water) which is characterized by an undivided strong line in the center. This undivided line in the center of *Kan* can be compared to a human body with a hinge that connects acupoint Bai-hui at the top of the head with Zhang-qiang at the tailbone along which *Zhong-qi* flows up and down, pumping energy to the four limbs and all parts of the body. *Kan* has intercourse with *Li* (fire), which corresponds to the eyes. The eyes represent the state of the mind/heart and can stimulate the movement of the four extremities. When the mind/heart is bright, all four extremities move like the sun and moon in the sky, shining ceaselessly on all myriad things under heaven.

The center of *Li* is empty, suggesting that the subject who retreats without being self-complacent will gain victory. The strong two lines at the bottom and top of *Li* represent the hands and the left and right halves of the body in the image of Shi (7), the symbol of the multitude and the army. In the conditions indicated by Shi (7), the mind/heart plays a paramount role like a commander-in-chief. Thus the mind/heart activates and controls the operations of the five sensitive organs and a hundred body structures in full accordance with their designated functions.

The moving topmost line of *Li* transforms it to *Gen*, which represents the temple's gatekeeper and correlates with the fingers. When the gates are ruined, the gatekeeper has to stand guard, walking back and forth. *Gen* has intercourse with *Dui* (marsh), which symbolizes joyful paths, metal and the west, all of which can be taken together to mean that intensive practice makes one's body strong as that of the Iron Man, the immortal of the west. When *Dui* inversed, it becomes *Zhen*, is represented by the dragon which embodies the transformations and endless changes of martial arts' postures and forms. In a sense, the dragon has no fixed form, and as such is likened to the image of hexagram Qian (15), the symbol for humility and tact. This suggests that if you encounter an opponent, you will be able to retreat smoothly in self-defense without error or regret.

Extrapolating principally from the fourth, fifth and the topmost lines of the Qian figure, we can see the nature of trigram *Kun* manifesting in the current *Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian* posture. The three divided lines allocated to it represents the conditions of emptiness in front and solidness behind. This will become clear once you look at the form from this perspective.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian*

Verse 1

The *Chao Tian Deng* posture is followed by *Dao Juan Hong*;
The left hand is the first one, which blows backward like a gust of wind.
Once the left hand completes its move, the right one starts to wend its way:
To counter-attack in retreat is a complex technique used by heroes.

Verse 2

Both arms rotate like a screw thread:
One move up and one down to keep the balance.
Rely on the *Taiji* motif in all respects — the true embodiment
Of *yin* and *yang*, growth and decline.
Thus a force of four ounces in the hands becomes able
To deflect the opponent's momentum of a thousand pounds.

Posture 50

White Goose Reveals Its Wings

Bai E Liang Chi

This third performance of *Bai E Liang Chi* is similar to the former two and is considered the last one in the *Taiji* routine.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

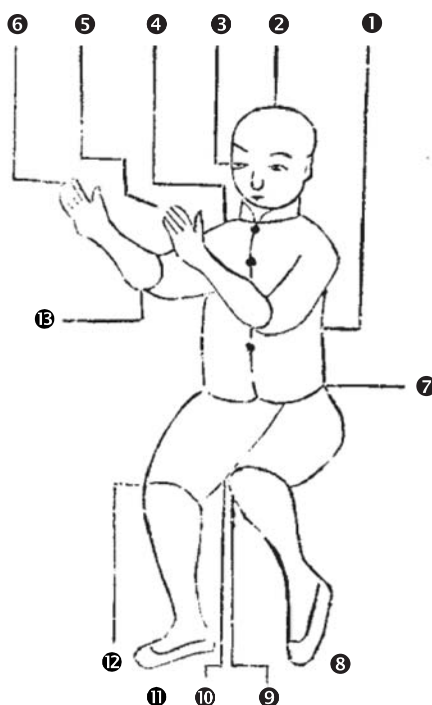


Fig. 3.50.1 White Goose Reveals Its Wings (Bai E Liang Chi)

Inscriptions:

❶ hang left elbow down;
❷ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;
❸ look at the right hand;
❹ relax and sink the shoulders down;
❺ the left hand follows the right one;
❻ the right hand leads the right foot;
❼ sink the waist energy (*jing* essence) downward;
❽ the left foot follows the right foot rightward;
❾ bend the left knee slightly;
❿ round-in and release energy from the crotch;
⓫ flatten the right sole on the ground;
⓬ bend the right knee;
⓭ point the right elbow tip downward.

2. *General description*

The *Bai E Liang Chi* posture is a continuation of the tactic developed in the preceding *Dao Juan Hong* posture[15], and is entirely focused on luring the opponent to advance further.

When the left hand takes its final position below, the right hand moves from the right to the left side about 30-35 cm from the left hand. The right hand plays the leading role while the left hand follows the body's movement, drawing a small circle from the left obliquely upward and to the right. Meanwhile, the right foot also draws a small circle as it takes a step to the right, followed by the left foot, making the distance between the two about 5-6 *cun*[16]. Draw the left foot to the ground and connect the energy between the hands and the supporting right foot. Turn the body to the right in one move.

[15] Also known as the '*Zhen Zhu Dao Juan Lian*' posture.
[16] about 15 cm.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

The lines of movement of *Bai E Liang Chi* can be seen in Fig. 3.50.1: the right arm moves in direct rotation while the right leg and left arm rotates in reverse direction using the silk-reeling method for energy regeneration. The right hand, right foot and left hand move in concert with each other, while the left foot waits until the right foot flattens on the ground before moving immediately rightward to draw on the ground.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The preceding *Dao Juan Hong* posture is associated with peril, while the current *Bai E Liang Chi* posture implies the removal of obstacles and the surmounting of crises to re-establish order. This is reflected in its allocation to hexagram Jie (40), symbol of overcoming and deliverance, suggesting that achieving success in the walk of life is not possible without using the technique of attraction.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

The third performance of the White Goose posture
Is rich with feathers of wings:
Revolving the left hand rightward – the pinnacle of skill.
The posture's objective is to store boundless capacity
And attract the opponent to fall into emptiness.

Verse 2

It is quite difficult to match one posture with another;
As for this one, the whole idea is to revolve in true rotation.
The excellent mechanism springs actually from the mind/heart
To make the opponent aware of the dragon's restless movements.

Verse 3

As for the secret of attracting into further advance,
The truth is that it's a never-ending story.
On one hand we have *yin*, on the other hand, *yang*,
Try to see the palms of both hands.
Try to rise before you lower —
This is the true secret;
You do not need to see the opponent's stick
Before defeating him in counter-attack.

Posture 51

Brush Knees and Twist Step (3rd Performance)

Lou-Xi Ao-bu

This is the third performance of *Lou-Xi Ao-bu* and it is identical to its predecessors. For explanations of the body positions, see Posture 6 (Volume One).

Calm your mind/heart and quieten your *qi*. Do not use energy released from any blockage in the chest.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

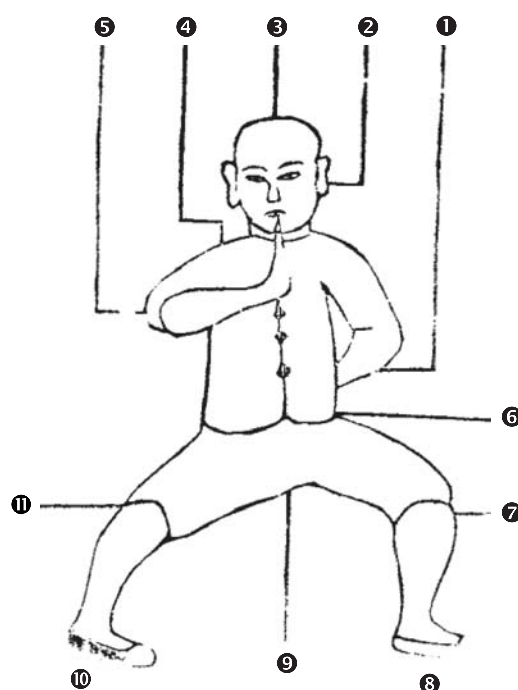


Fig. 3.51.1 3rd performance of Brush Knees and Twist Step (Lou-Xi Ao-bu)

Inscriptions:

1. place the left hand behind your back;
2. look at the middle finger of the right hand in front;
3. focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;
4. relax and sink the shoulders down;
5. hang the right elbow tip downward;
6. sink waist energy downward;
7. place the left knee forward in a left bow step;
8. flatten the left foot on the ground, with the left toes slightly ahead of the right toes;
9. round-in the crotch to accumulate energy (*jing* essence) properly;
10. place the right foot slightly backward with the sole flattened on the ground;
11. bend the right knee.

2. *General description*

Move both hands downward from their position in front of the chest by applying the silk-reeling method in reverse: the right hand brushes over the right knee, then turns back until it stops about 35 cm in front of the chest with the middle fingertip at nose level. Look straight ahead at the middle fingertip. The left hand brushes over the left knee and draws a circle to move behind the back, coming to a rest midway at the small of the back, with all five fingertips bunched and pointing up.

Next, take a wide step left with the left foot and point the toes inward in a hook foot position using a heel-to-toe movement. The upper and lower body move in concert to enable an interchange of energy.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

Hold the head upright and look straight ahead. Connect the energy between the shoulders, elbows, hands, crotch, knees and feet. Calm the mind/heart and quieten the *qi* so that the upper and lower body becomes

integrated. Return *qi* to the Dan-tian and apply the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration in reverse to all limbs except the left foot, which takes steps in direct movement. Thus the *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture is used purely to create energy coherence in all parts of the body[17].

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The current *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture relates to the directions of *Qian* (heaven), *Kun* (earth), *Kan* (water) and *Li* (fire), which correspond to four cardinal directions[18]. In contrast, the trigrams *Dui* (marsh), *Zhen* (thunder), *Xun* (wind) and *Gen* (mountain) correspond to the four corners. Hence the virtues of all Eight Trigrams are distributedly in this way to work in concert with the movements of the body.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

> The third performance of the *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture
> Reflects the former two with respect to form and content;
> Now you're ready to counter-attack in all directions;
> You have just started to realize what *gong-fu* really is,
> So do not indulge yourself with empty talk.

Verse 2

> When the Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*
> Brings you to the state of tranquility,
> You'll see the world of neither rest nor movement;
> You are covered all around, but who detects that?
> Once the opponent touches you, he will know himself!

[17] See also explanations in Posture 6 (Volume One).
[18] For more details see the explanations in Posture 6 (Volume One).

Posture 52

FAN THOUGH THE BACK OR FLASH ARMS LIKE A FAN

Shan Tong Bei

The current performance of *Shan Tong Bei* is identical to its previous performance in all respects.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

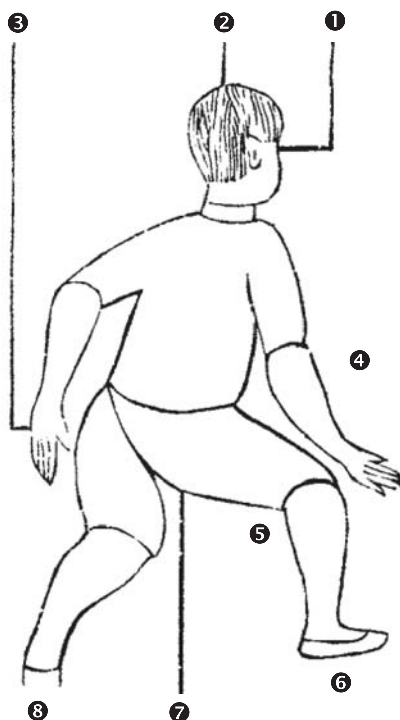


Fig. 3.52.1 Fan Though the Back or Flash Arms Like a Fan (Shan Tong Bei)

Inscriptions:

❶ look straight ahead;
❷ focus the energy at the top of the head;
❸ place the left hand behind;
❹ bend the torso at the waist;
❺ bend the right knee;
❻ place the right foot forward and flatten the sole on the ground;
❼ sink crotch power (*jing* essence) downward;
❽ place the left foot behind.

2. *General description*

After completion of the preceding *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture, start the *Shan Tong Bei* posture with a wide step forward with the right foot. At the same time, draw a small circle leftward with the right hand, then move it forward until it stops in front of the crotch. Bend the right elbow, face the palm forward and point the fingertips obliquely downward. Then lift the right hand above the top of the head, fingers pointing up.

While this happens, take a wide step forward with the left foot. The left hand then follows the left foot and moves forward until it stops at shoulder level, arms out-stretched. Next, following the torso's forward bow, the right foot moves behind the left foot, while the right hand descends until it stops behind the right foot with the right arm stretched at waist level.

This *Shan Tong Bei* posture is categorized as a large-scale body movement and is managed by focusing energy at the top of the head. While taking the steps, sink the crotch energy downward to increase agility. Relax both shoulders and open the four limbs so as to synchronize the loose movements of the upper and lower body.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

See the figures and detailed explanations of Posture 19 (Volume Two).

4. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

Again, use the right hand to deflect the opponent's frontal attack,
Then turn around to repel a rear attack in a brush-loin gesture.
Who could have forseen the abrupt bending of your waist?
Raise your hipbone to drive the opponent into a corner.

The *Shan Tong Bei* posture implies the quick use of power to properly complete the combat mission. Though it may appear clumsy at first sight, the form has a hidden grace which is incomparable.

Posture 53

SCREEN HAND AND PUNCH (6TH PERFORMANCE)

Yan Shou Chui

The sixth performance of *Yan Shou Chui* is a duplicate of its third performance in all respects. However, while all five previous performances employ the punch to the crotch area as the final and main movement of the posture, the sixth performance functions as a transitional form linking the preceding *Shan Tong Bei* posture with the *Lan Zha Yi* posture which follows.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

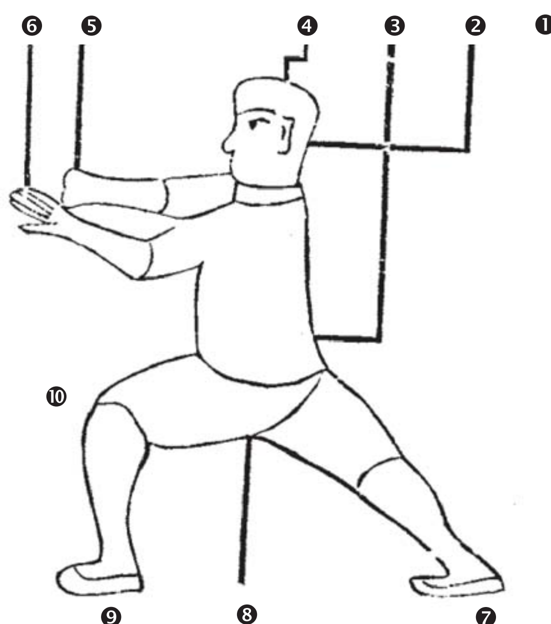


Fig. 3.53.1 6th performance of Screen Hand and Punch (Yan Shou Chui)

Inscriptions:

❶ the right elbow tip points up;
❷ listen attentively to the situation behind the body;
❸ sink waist energy downward;
❹ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head to assume the leading role;
❺ clench the right hand into a fist and punch straight ahead; look at the right fist;
❻ rest the left palm with outstretched fingers beside the right fist;
❼ the rear right foot digs firmly into the ground;
❽ sink crotch energy (*jing* essence) downward;
❾ flatten the left sole onto the ground and press down it firmly downward;
❿ bend the left knee.

2. *General description*

In the third performance of *Yan Shou Chui*, the right hand punches forward in attack while the right foot takes a step forward to close-in on the opponent if needed. Omit this step if you are too close to the opponent to execute a punch, and leave your right foot behind instead to form a left bow step.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*[19]

The preceding *Shan Tong Bei* posture[20] is used to strike by turning around with the right hand and placing the right foot at the rear. It requires application of the silk-reeling method for energy regeneration, which means the right hand moves forward in a circle to execute a powerful punch at the

[19] For further explanations, see the section on 'Internal power' of Posture 33 (Volume Two).
[20] The internal power of the *Shan Tong Bei* posture is explained here because it forms the basis of the *Yan Shou Chui* posture which follows. Th energy of *Shan Tong Bei* flows continuously into *Yan Shou Chui*, thus ensuring smooth energy flow from one posture to another.

end. This right punch unleashes the concentrated force and spirit of the whole body to knock the opponent down at one stroke.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The *Yan Shou Chui* posture is associated with the Cui (45), Xiao-guo (62) and Da-zhuang (34) figures. For further explanations refer to the third performance of *Yan Shou Chui*. This form is allocated to hexagram Zhen (51), symbol of sudden movements used to terrify opponents to death. As the saying goes, "The movement like a thunderclap terrifies all within a hundred miles." So too, the *Yan Shou Chui* punch startles the distant and frightens the near.

5. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the 6th performance of Yan Shou Chui*

A clash of thunder raises clouds of dust:
All things within a hundred miles are terrified to death.
The right hand draws forward from its position below in a punch,
Like the clamour of a shower of stones in the sky.

Posture 54

HOLDING ONE LAP PULL ON ROBE (4TH PERFORMANCE)

Lan Zha Yi

The current and final performance of *Lan Zha Yi* is very similar to its previous three performances.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

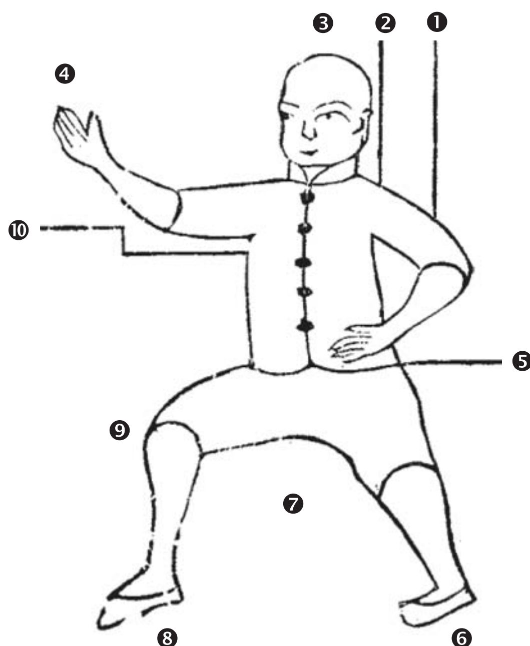


Fig. 3.54.1 4th performance of Holding One Lap Pull on Robe (Lan Zha Yi)

Inscriptions:

❶ the left hand forks at the left side of the waist;

❷ relax and sink the left shoulder down;

❸ in the course of the entire routine keep the energy focused at the top of the head to lead the movements of the four limbs; without this guidance, the body movements would suffer from a great deficiency in force and spirit — without a commander-in-chief, synchronizing and establishing order in the body's movements would be very difficult;

❹ look straight ahead at the middle fingertip of the right hand; all right fingers should be stuck together and pointing up;

❺ sink the waist energy downward;

❻ stamp the left foot firmly on the ground;

❼ crotch energy should be sunk downward from beginning to end; keep the crotch rounded-in to stabilize and strengthen the lower body;

❽ flatten the right sole on the ground;

❾ bend the right knee with a bow step forward;

❿ hollow the chest and fold both shoulders inward to accumulate energy naturally.

2. *General description*

Withdraw the right hand to the right ribs and place the rear right foot just behind the left foot in one synchronous movement. Next, draw a small circle forward and upward with the right hand from its position in front of the ribs, slowly stretching the right arm to the right until the right hand stops at shoulder level, palm facing left and fingers pointing obliquely upward.

A little after the right hand starts its small circular movement, the right foot takes a slow step to the right, while the left foot remains immobile in its initial position. Rotate the left hand in a circle from inside out, then lower it below the left armpit to fork the waist from the left.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

The right arm applies the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration in direct movement, coiling from inside out toward the fingers. At the same time, the right leg reels energy in the same direct movement toward the toes. The left hand applies the silk-reeling movement in reverse, rotating from outside in as described earlier in the first performance of *Lan Zha Yi*[21].

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

In the previous performances of *Lan Zha Yi*, posture 2[22] is associated with hexagram Tai (11), posture 21[23] with Xiao-xu (9), posture 42[24] with Meng (4). The current *Lan Zha Yi* posture is associated with a dragon lying dormant and hidden in the deep, awaiting the time for active deeds, as suggested by the left arm bent at the elbow. The extended right arm corresponds to a dragon appearing in the field in the image of hexagram Qian (1), indicating that the changes of the heavenly course is beyond determination, the only certain thing being that it is allocated to *yang* substance and solid virtues. Thus both hands manifest the way of changes, and hence their association with dragons.

5. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

Stretch the right arm forward, which looks like a dragon,
And cover your left side with the left arm bent at the elbow.
From the Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*
The whole body's energy is governed;
A combination of *yin* and *yang* shields the breast.

[21] See explanations to Posture 21 (Volume Two).
[22] See Volume One.
[23] See Volume Two.
[24] See Volume Three.

Posture 55

Single Whip (7th Performance)

Dan Bian

The seventh performance of Single Whip is the similar to the previous six.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

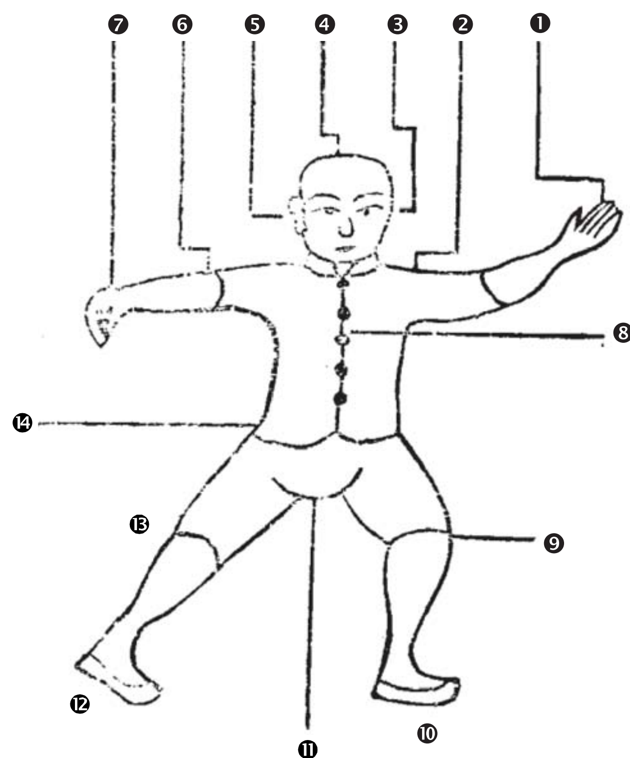


Fig. 3.55.1 7th performance Single Whip (Dan Bian)

Inscriptions:

❶ stretch the left arm out to the left and keep the fingers stuck together;

❷ relax the shoulders;

❸ keep the middle finger of the left hand within your vision;

❹ focus the energy at the top of the head;

❺ listen attentively to the situation behind you;

❻ place the right arm on the right at shoulder level in a natural way;

❼ bunch the fingertips of the right hand and point them downward at the wrist to form a hook hand gesture;

❽ hollow the chest and send the accumulated qi down to the Dan-tian to fill it to capacity; do not allow any remaining *qi* to rise;

❾ bend the left knee;

❿ flatten the left foot on the ground and turn it inward in the shape of the Chinese character 'eight' (八);

⓫ sink crotch energy downward and round-in the crotch;

⓬ form a hook foot shape with the right foot by pointing the toes forward and digging the heel into the ground;

⓭ do not loosen the right leg;

⓮ sink waist energy downward.

2. *General description*

The left hand moves forward from the left side of the waist toward the right arm. The right arm draws a small circle in direct rotation, then slowly moves its way leftward, extending the arm to form a right hook hand. Keep the middle finger of left hand within your vision. The right hand continues to draw forward in a small circle to create an energy connection with the left hand. The right arm rotates in reverse movement, while the left foot moves in a curve to the side of the right foot. After drawing to the right foot, the left foot takes a wide step left and flattens on the ground in the shape of the Chinese character 'eight' (八) by turning the toes inward. The heel of the rear right foot may be re-adjusted in the final position.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

Both arms accumulate energy through closing. The left hand applies the silk-reeling technique in reverse movement to send energy from the left ribs up toward the armpit, rotating from outside in, then along the shoulder and forearm to the roots of the fingers. The right hand's energy issues from the right ribs up toward the armpit, passing through the right shoulder and coiling in reverse movement from inside out along the forearm toward the fingertips.

The right foot does not move, thought the heel may be re-adjusted to form a hook foot shape. After the left foot draws beside the right foot, it takes a step left again in direct rotation of energy. Starting from the roots of the fingers of both hands, energy coils from inside out until it reaches the hipbones, then it reverses direction to rotate inwards. The left hand leads the movement of the left foot, while the right hand leads the right foot. The movements of all four limbs are coordinated from the 'command post' at the top of the head as described in the explanation for the third performance of *Dan Bian*.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The third performance of *Dan Bian* corresponds to hexagrams Kan (29), Li (30), Pi (12) and Tai (11). Posture 27[25] (*Zhong Dan Bian*) correlates with Wu-wang (25); posture 36 with *Kan* (water) and *Li* (fire), *Qian* (heaven) and *Kun* (earth); posture 40[26] is associated with Zhen (51). Posture 43[27] correlates with the moving figures *Kan* and Li, but since it is weak outside but strong inside, it is also associated with *Qian* and *Kun*[28]. *Qian* and *Kun* are the parents of all six children[29], hence the derivation of their associations.

[25] Zhong Dan Bian (Volume Two).
[26] 5th performance (Volume Three).
[27] 6th performance (Volume Three).
[28] Since Kan and Li are the moving trigrams they can be turned into Qian and Kun accordingly.
[29] 'Six children' refers to the six lines of a hexagram.

5. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

Seven performances of *Dan Bian,*
Like seven days of the week flying away,
To start the cycle from the beginning.
Empty from above and solid below,
Its image includes *Kan* (water) and *Li* (fire).
Who could have known that the strong and weak
Embrace all things?
All six children
Emerge from the parental Two Forms.

Posture 56

WAVE HANDS LIKE CLOUDS (3RD PERFORMANCE)

Xia Yun Shou

The third performance of *Zuo You Yun Shou* is similar to its previous two performances. Both arms circle downward and forward, then rotate backward in a style reminiscent of clouds whirling back and forth in the sky. The rotation of the arms is also likened to the penetrating turns of a corkscrew.

1. *Diagram of the posture*



Fig. 3.56.1 3rd performance of Wave Hands Like Clouds (Xia Yun Shou)

Inscriptions:

❶ move left hand backward with fingers stuck together;
❷ bend the left elbow;
❸ accumulate energy in the chest area;
❹ relax and sink the left shoulder downward;
❺ relax and sink the right shoulder downward;
❻ round-in the crotch;
❼ sink waist energy downward;
❽ after dropping the hands down in an inward rotation, you feel the need to lift them up in continuation;
❾ flatten the left foot firmly on the ground from heel to toe — dig the heel in the ground, while the toes follow the movement of the left fingers, as though being lifted up;
❿ sink energy in the small of the back downward and bend the rear right leg at the knee;
⓫ lift the right foot and place it beside the left one without touching the ground, while the right hand moves slowly once more in direct rotation to the right; take a step about 35-40 cm to the right with the right foot.

2. *Diagram of Yun Shou's synchronous movement*

Generally speaking, the correctness of your posture in *Taiji* boxing is determined by the way you move. However, the correctness of the succeeding posture is usually determined by how you performed the preceding one. In this particular case, the preceding *Dan Bian* posture is used against the opponent approaching from the right, so you first need to attract him with your right hand. In order to do this gesture properly, you need to employ your right shoulder, which requires you to first to lift up the left hand. Working backward, this means that you first need to relax and sink down the left shoulder, close the chest and have a connection with the crotch

energy (*jing* essence). When the left leg is solid, the right leg is empty. The body moves synchronously with the movement of the hands.

First start to move the right hand in order to activate the mechanism of the posture's movement. Like pulling silk thread from a cocoon, you must not over-exert yourself or you will break the thread, while under-exertion may result in extracting nothing at all. So, moving with slow lightness enables you to draw internal energy out smoothly to the external. If internal energy (*jing* essence) is occasionally broken off, it must be re-connected immediately. This energy may seem loose, but it is not; it may seem stretched, but it is not. And if it breaks off, the attention of your mind/heart remains unwavering.

This internal energy is not displayed outwardly before its release, nor can it be detected after its release. But at the very instant of attack, it is quickly discharged like lightning, while the mind is still focused on the opponent. It is stored by the body's circular movements — neither too straight nor too bent. If the body's movements are too straight, the internal power will be broken, if too bent, the posture will be unsupported. Only natural curves can store internal energy in the joints of the bone for later use.

The way to drop the hands down and lift them up in this posture is determined by careful visualization of the entire combination of movements of all the limbs and body parts. As the hands drop down, you should think of lifting them up to fully manifest the internal power of the posture as a refined combination of *qi* energy and *shen* (spirit). To do this, you need to continue moving so that the power of the current posture is maintained with sufficient overflow to drive the movements of the subsequent posture. The resulting feeling is one of wanting to stop but not being able to, since the mechanism of the subsequent posture has already been launched in advance. In other words, in order to stop the mechanism of the subsequent form, you need to stop interrupt the current posture.

Therefore it is said that conventional stoppage looks like 'not-stopping'. This means that even if your movements stop externally, you continue to

move internally in your mind; and your *shen* cannot be filled up to the brim as there is no brim for spiritual development. On the other hand, 'not-stopping' can also look like a stoppage, caused by a slowing down of motion. In actual fact, if a routine is to be interrupted for a while, it must still have a thread of energy linked to the subsequent form, otherwise the mechanism of energy will become exhausted and come to a full stop. From this point of view, we have to carefully consider the condition under which the right arm produces its movement.

3. *Diagram of the right hand's movement in Yun Shou*

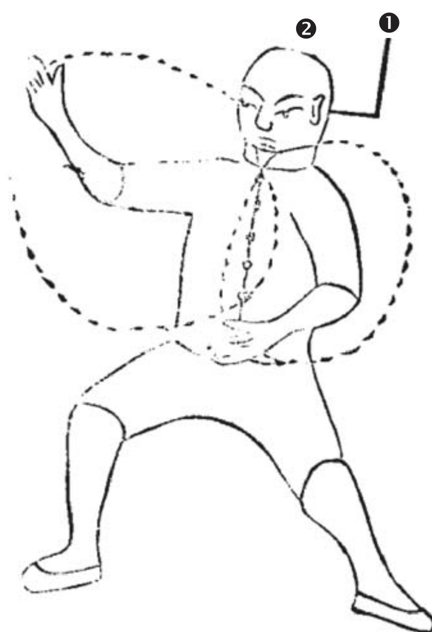


Fig. 3.56.2 Movement of the right hand in Yun Shou

Inscriptions:

- ❶ the left ear listens to the situation on the left side;
- ❷ focus the energy at the top of the head.

After drawing a circle, the right hand stops in the upper position, leading the left hand to follow rightward until it stops in front of the chest; mov-

ing down from the chest until the position depicted in the figure, the left hand draws a semi-circle to continue moving up and forward without stopping. Keep your eyes on the right hand drawing a circle — as it moves left, look at its middle finger, and stretch the root of this finger using strength. When the right hand reaches its position in front of the chest, continue to move it up, then downward and backward in a large circle without stopping. Following the right hand's movement, draw the right foot behind the left foot, then step it outwards and to the right without a break, finally flattening it on the ground.

4. *Diagram of left hand's movement in Yun Shou*

This figure shows the left hand moving in a silk-reeling circle upward and leftward from its position in front of the chest until it returns to its initial position. At the same time, bend the right wrist and move in the same path as the left hand. Keep your eyes on the left hand's fluid circular movement.

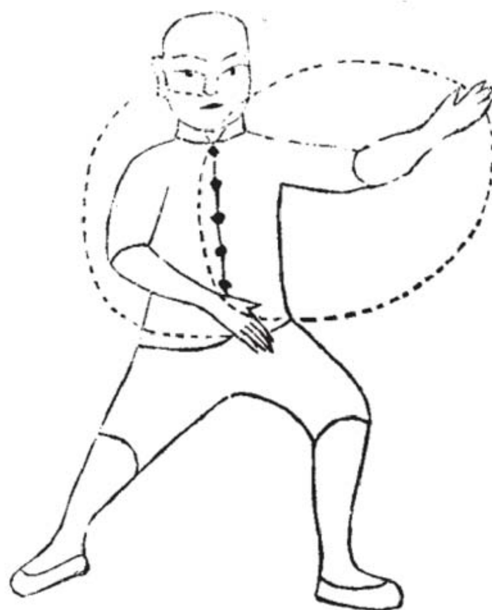


Fig. 3.56.3 Movement of the left hand in Yun Shou

Inscriptions:

- Relax and sink the shoulders downward; the left shoulder follows the left hand in drawing a circle. Focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head; look at the left hand. Listen to the situation behind your body. Step the left foot about 45 cm to the left. The left foot follows the left hand's movement in the same style as the right hand and right foot. Step the right foot about 30 cm to the right; hence the difference between the left and right steps are a few *cun*[30] to the left;
- When the left hand is at the upper position, the right hand moves slowly from its lower position to the front of the chest; keep the fingers stuck together and continue moving the right hand left and up in a circle, finally returning it to its initial position on the right.

The *Zuo You You Shou* posture comes under the category of large-scale *Taiji* body movements, so it is oriented toward extending rather than folding or bending the body. Once the body is extended, it doesn't need to extend again.

Hence when the left hand moves up, the right shoulder naturally sinks down and the power of the right arm is used to attract the opponent into emptiness. That is why there is no need to bend the arm again, nor do you need to re-extend it. If there is no stretching or bending, where does the power come from? The most important thing to understand here is that the core of the movement lies completely in the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration which attracts the opponent into further advance. When left hand moves up, the right hand follows suit to attract the opponent into emptiness, moving to the front of the chest to connect with the chest energy. At the same time, energy at the small of the back sinks down to support the rounded-in crotch energy.

Flatten the left foot on the ground to form a solid support for the stance and take an empty right step with the right foot. In this way, the upper

[30] about 15 cm.

ody achieves an agility approximating that of posture 62 called *Xia-bu Kua Hu*[31]. The spirit of the corner-oriented *Xia-bu Kua Hu* is a good example of an appropriate response to confrontation and should be noted by conscientious students.

5. *Internal power (nei jing)*

Qi in the Dan-tian tends to be distributed to five places in the body — the four limbs and the head, but it is integrated *qi* which penetrates throughout the upper and lower body, transmitting energy without pause. Heart *qi* guides the flow of Dan-tian energy upward in the ratio of six Dan-tian energy to one heart energy. Three parts of the energy emerges from the thigh, whilst one part of the energy is derived from the heart to fill the shoulders and arms, reaching the fingers of both hands.

The energy flowing within the bones is called *Zhong-qi*, which may also manifest at skin level. The silk-reeling method takes more than 4 to 1, while *Zhong-qi* both thighs takes 2 to flow through left thigh and 2 for right one toward both feet and toes. Step on the heel first then flatten the sole and press the calf down until the toes dig into the ground. The right and left styles of *Yun Shou* are performed in direct rotation: first move the leading left hand up and the right down, then rotate the leading right hand up and the left one down.

Both hands move in a circle in front of the chest, the left hand moving leftward and the right hand rightward. So, like the sun and moon alternating in the sky, the right and left hands rotate without pause around each other: when the left hand moves up and leftward, the right hand moves down in front of the torso; and when the right hand moves up and rightward, the left hand descends slowly to the front of the lower torso. All the while, however, both hands protect the upper body. Also, when the left hand moves to the left, it is followed by the left foot, which steps ahead diagonally to the left. Since the steps taken are mostly transverse, the size of each is not considered large.

[31] The 'Crouch Step Astride the Tiger' posture (Volume Three).

The circle drawn by the right hand can be considered large-scale, while the right foot's transverse step rightward may be considered a small-scale movement. Without this small step rightward, it is almost impossible to advance gradually to the left — while the distance between the left and right steps is about 15 cm, the right step is longer. If, on the other hand, your leftward step is too narrow, then you can increase the number of steps — it is normal practice to take three to four steps leftward. The final step leftward should be taken with the left hand positioned above, that is, its initial position in the posture, with the left elbow bent at an angle of 90°. The right hand's position at the right upper corner is the same as in the *Yun Shou* posture. At the same time, raise the right heel to draw the right foot beside the left. Each transverse step of both feet should not exceed 2 *chi*[32].

Generally speaking, the posture's leftward movement is performed in direct rotation, indicating that the right hand and foot work in accord with each other: when the left hand moves up and left from its position in front of the torso, the left arm stretched forward and the left foot taking a step left, the right hand follows the left hand and moves downward to the front of the torso, while the right foot draws to the ground about 12 cm away from the left foot. The right hand then continues to move up and right without a break in a circle, passing in front of the chest with the right arm extended forward, while the left hand takes its place at the lower position in front of the torso to continue the second half of the circle.

As you continue to turn the torso to the right, move the right hand to the right side, palm turned outward, and move the left hand upward in a semicircle, palm turned obliquely inward. Then turn the torso to the left, moving the left forearm to the left side, palm turned outward; simultaneously move the right hand down to the left, past the torso in a semi-circle with palm turned outward. At the same time, raise the left heel and take a transverse step left with the left foot. Focus your eyes on the left hand and shift your body weight onto the left leg while drawing the right foot beside the left. Then move the right palm upward past the front of the chest, while the left palm moves to the left side with palm turned outward.

[32] 60-65 cm.

6. *Diagram of the movement of both hands*

The left hand moves up while the right hand moves down in concord with each other. The right hand moves up and right while the left hand moves down and in in direct rotation. Both are in full concord with each other.

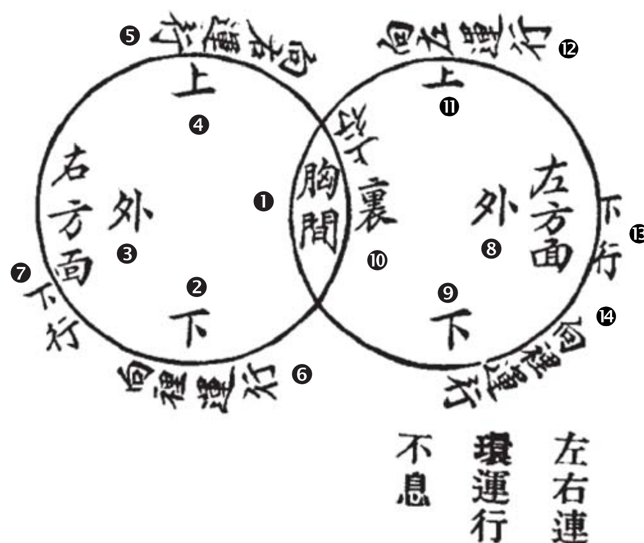


Fig. 3.56.4 Movement of both hands in Yun Shou

Inscriptions:

[Inside left circle]:

❶ chest area;

❷ downward;

❸ right side; outward;

❹ upward.

[Outside left circle]:

❺ move rightward;

❻ move inward;

❼ downward.

[Inside right circle]:

❽ outward, left side;

❾ downward;

❿ upward;

⓫ up.

[Outside of right circle]:

⓬ move leftward;

⓭ move downward;

⓮ move inward.

[Bottom text] Make the left and right circles without a break.

7. *Diagram of the movement of both feet*

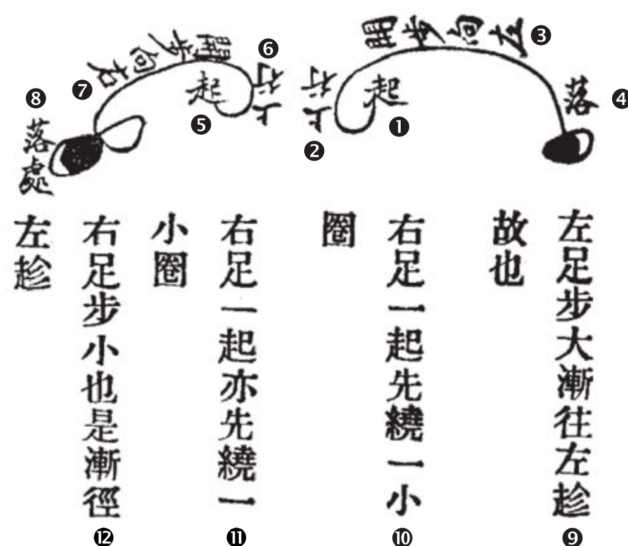


Fig. 3.56.5 Movement of both feet in Yun Shou

Inscriptions:

[Right drawing]:

❶ starting point;

❷ move upward;

❸ take a step to the left;

❹ lower the left foot here.

[Left side drawing]:

❺ starting point;

❻ move upward;

❼ take a step to the right;

❽ lower the right foot here.

[Text at bottom]

❾ the left foot takes a left step wider than the right foot's step to the right, to advance gradually to the left side;

❿ raise the left foot to make a small circle;

⓫ raise the right foot to make a small circle too;

⓬ take a smaller step with the right foot to turn the body slightly leftward.

8. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

While performing *Yun Shou*, empty your mind and brighten your heart completely while both hands draw circles in the image of the sun and moon alternating in the sky. For this reason, this posture is associated with hexagram Li (30) which symbolizes brightness, sunrise and attachment. Its explanation states that, "Li means being attached. This means the attachment of a strong line to the two surrounding weak lines above and below, just as the sun and moon have their place in the surrounding sky, or the grains, grass and trees have their place on earth. All things have their pairs and couples, and if they are paired correctly, they will flourish and reign perfectly under heaven. The double brightness of the two trigrams adheres to what is correct, and the result is transformation and perfection of all under the sky."

The second and fifth divided and weak lines show *Zhong-qi* flowing through the emptiness of the mind/heart to transform all things under heaven. Hexagram *Li* possesses *Zhong-qi* of *Qian* (heaven), so *Zhong-qi* of *Taiji* boxing is associated with *Qian* as well.

The symbolism of hexagram *Li* is formed by the repeating the trigram for brightness. Thus the left hand corresponds to the sun and the right to the moon. Extending and bending both hands symbolize the brightness of the heavens and the Creator, who, shining on all four cardinal directions, occupies her proper place at the center, hence appearing to the world as the center of the universe. The bottom moving line of *Qian* changes the *Li* into *Gen* (mountain), symbol of stopping by the hands, thus indicating that the hands are used to arrest or deflect the opponent's attack.

Gen then has intercourse with *Dui* (marsh), the symbol of joyful direction. This implies that you must act as an integrated unit against the opponent to form the motif of energetic harmony, in order to attract him to further advance and fall into the emptiness you created.

Gen is also the inverse of *Zhen* (thunder), which symbolizes startling movement and can be used to raise the force and spirit and to shake the

whole body from the inside. *Zhen* is associated with the feet. This third *Zhen* figure is also derived from the association of the left and right style movements with *Qian* (heaven) and *Kun* (earth), which have intercourse with each other.

Zhen corresponds to the east, the direction from which all myriad things originate. It also brings life-giving energy, and when it has intercourse with *Xun* (wind), *Zhen* activates things into movement while *Xun* scatters their good seeds. Thus all the body structures operate and function well under the conditions of *Xun*, which is the inverse of *Gen*.

Gen is associated with gates, such as temple gates, and with the hands, which also acts as gates to the body. Just as people used to hide behind temple gates to escape violence in times of disorder, so too you need to guard and protect your body with your hands with the strength of storm-proof gates. *Li* (fire) has intercourse with *Kan* (water), the symbol of peril, so people with an empty mind/heart must be cautious in dealing with people and situations, and not descend into over-confidence and conceit.

Although the opponent may attack you from any side — left and right, upper and lower body, top and bottom — he seeks most to attack your points of vulnerability. As such, you must be neither flat nor slanted but rounded and invulnerable, as signified by the second divided line of Li (30), which shows its subject "attending to others in his central place under the sign of yellow brightness. There will be great good fortune owing to his right choice of associates holding fast to the course of the Golden Mean." This means that by following the *yin* and *yang* principle and balancing the internal and external properly, you can remain gentle and agreeable on the outside while maintaining uprightness and outspokenness inside, thus enabling you to overcome dangers, as illustrated by the subject of the second line.

Li (fire) is able to melt down strong metal shackles and liberate, so it signals much good fortune in the end.

9. *Affinities between the posture and the figures in the Book of Changes*

The Dun figure (33), symbolizing retirement, also implies storage. Hence the energy is valuable due to its ability to be stored internally without manifesting externally.

Figure Ding (50) suggests an ancient cooking vessel which stands on a tripod and has two movable rings on each side, hence embodying the movement of hands in a circle. The sturdy three legs of the vessel represent the 'immovable as a mountain' stance of the *Zuo You Yun Shou* posture: one foot is immovable and stamped on the ground like the legs of the tripod, while the other is like a lame but unbroken leg which also contributes stability to the tripod. And the third leg, though seemingly unstable, also imparts stability to the vessel. Applying this analogy to the *Taiji* boxer who has only two legs, this means that one leg is supporting and carries most of the body weight, while the other is used to stabilize the stance.

The Song figure (6), the symbol of contention and litigation, depicts two people in confrontation, coming from the upper trigram for heaven (strength), and the lower trigram representing water (peril). Indeed, it is the coming together of strength and peril that evokes the idea of conflict. Meanwhile, both hands rotate in the correct order, well matched in their ability to guard the body at left and right, leaving no gap for attack.

Hexagram Jia-ren (37), symbolizing the family, implies that all five sensitive organs and the hundred body structures work in concert with each other, like a family united: men and women, old and young, all do their best to establish order inside and outside.

Wu-wang (25), the symbol of purity of mind, refers to freedom from insincerity in *Taiji* boxing, which makes your position become more solid, correct and impartial. Since everything obeys the universal principles of good and evil, do not allow yourself to fall into self-deceit when problem solving.

Ge (49), the symbol of change and reform, implies that the right hand should rotate to replace the left hand from its lower position in front of the torso. When both hands work in accord, it is a good indicator of how well the whole mechanism operates in synchronicity.

Da-xu (26), symbol of great accumulation and strong restraint, indicates that *yin* and *yang* of the *Taiji* motif encompass an extremely wide range of activities. The movement of the feet bears inner or moral significance, and although both feet may be quite close to each other, each is distinguished by its own function.

Zhong-fu (61), symbol of veritable sincerity, represents the natural instinct to fight with honesty in *Taiji* boxing.

Da-zhuang (34), the symbol of great vigor and flourish, indicates that all the four merits are advancing and cannot be held back. Through boxing practice, you can develop *Zhong-qi* to restrain your ambitions and self-centered requirements. Selfishness grows in mud and can bring you to a dangerous situation with excessive good wine and food. Again, practice caution by always first taking good care of yourself before over-indulging in self-centered or hedonistic pursuits.

The Xu hexagram (5) suggests that "with faith and sincerity declared, there will be brilliant success. With firm correctness there will be good fortune, and it will be advantageous to cross the great stream." The explanation for Xu (5) states that: "Xu denotes waiting and marking time, as if there is peril ahead. But notwithstanding the firmness and strength indicated by the inner trigram of heaven, its subject does not allow himself to get diverted to the extremities but holds on fast to the Golden Mean." This means that the forward moving *Zhong-qi* of the inner trigram for heaven will be followed by meritorious achievement.

The lowest undivided line of Xu (5) shows its subject "waiting in the distant border. It will bode well for him to continue maintaining the purpose shown," as he makes no rash movement to counteract the difficulties of the situation. Thus he will not fail to pursue the regular course. The second

undivided line shows its subject "waiting on the wet sand," meaning that he occupies his position in the center with generous forbearance; and although "he suffers the small injury of being spoken against," he will bring things to good issue in the end. The third undivided line shows its subject "waiting in the riverside mud," indicating that calamity is close at hand, as it was in the outer trigram. Though this means that "he thereby invites the approach of injury," he may not suffer bad consequences if he is reverential and careful.

The fourth divided line shows its subject "waiting in the place of blood. But he will get out of the cavern" only because he adapts to circumstances and heeds the requirements of the times. The fifth undivided line, by virtue of its position in a central and correct place, shows its subject "waiting amidst the cutlery of the feast. Through his firmness and correctness there will be good fortune." The topmost divided line shows its subject has "entered into the cavern. But three guests come to his help without being urged. If he receives them respectfully, there will be good fortune in the end." This means that although the occupant and the place are not suited to each other, there has been no great loss in what has been done. The hand's movement to the left denotes the advance of *Zhong-qi* and not its retreat, indicating that after encountering dangers and emerging from it, there will be good fortune in the end.

10. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

The sun and moon shine brilliantly — dawn turns the day over to noon;
The movement of the right and left hands resembles the silk spinning-wheel turning to the left
With left and right feet stepping leftward. When the left hand is in the upper position,
The right hand is placed below to establish good order in the situation.
Then, turning to the right, take an especially short step to the right;
When the left foot takes a step right, it means it has found a proper alternative.
Moving left and right freely — each style has its due season.
In the course of each season one round replaces another.
Yin and *yang* of the *Taiji* motif are the true creators indeed;
Two mandarin ducks have embroidered themselves
To show themselves in front of the superior man.

Verse 2

Now it comes and now it goes — the hand rotation,
and yet once more;
There is no difference between the preceding and following rounds.
However, when moving a hand upward from a low position, look with care:
The left foot's position is slightly different to what follows in the interim.

Posture 57

HIGH PAT ON HORSE

Gao Tan Ma

Fig. 3.57.1 depicts the front posture of the new style of *Gao Tan Ma,* while Fig. 3.57.2 illustrates the back posture of the old style.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

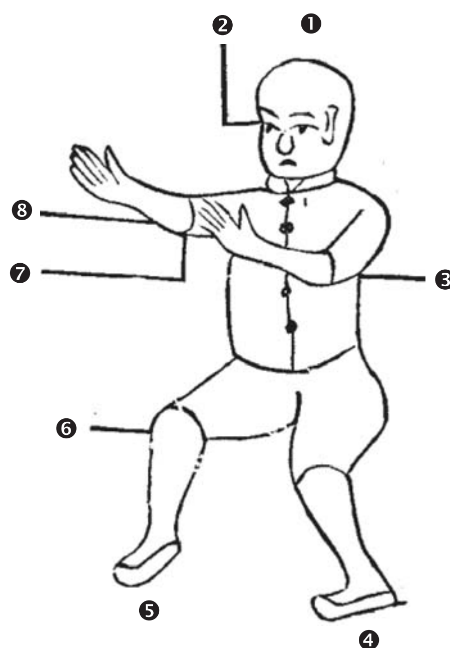


Fig. 3.57.1 Front posture of new style of High Pat on Horse (Gao Tan Ma)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;
- ❷ look at the right hand;
- ❸ bend the left arm at the elbow and drop the wrist down;
- ❹ flatten the left sole on the ground;
- ❺ draw the right foot on the ground;
- ❻ bend the right knee;
- ❼ hang the right elbow tip down;
- ❽ stretch the right arm out but not completely, palm facing up.

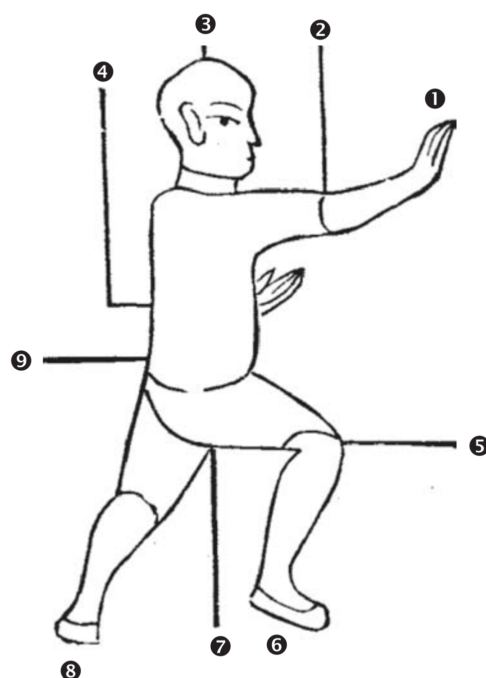


Fig. 3.57.2 Back posture of old style of High Pat on Horse (Gao Tan Ma)

Inscriptions:

❶ the back of the right hand faces upward;

❷ draw the right forearm forward;

❸ focus the energy at the top of the head;

❹ bend the left arm at the elbow with palm facing up;

❺ bend the right knee;

❻ take an empty step with the right foot drawing on the ground;

❼ sink the crotch energy down;

❽ flatten the left sole on the ground;

❾ sink the waist power down.

2. *General description*

In the new style of the *Gao Tan Ma* posture, the right foot moves past the left foot to take a step forward. Next draw the left foot to the ground beside the right foot. Both hands move together with the right foot to draw a large circle down, back and forward, the palms moving parallel to each other about 30 cm apart.

In contrast, the old style of the posture requires both hands to draw a large circle as they move inward directly from behind with the turning of the torso. During this movement, the right foot remains immobile from its position, while the left foot withdraws and flattens behind the right foot. Draw the right forearm in front and bend the left arm at the elbow to move to the front of the right ribs, palm up. The distance between both palms is about 45 cm. Keep them in a hold-ball gesture.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

For both the new and old styles of *Gao Tan Ma*, the right hand draws a circle for energy regeneration, moving from its low position behind upward and inward, then outward again in slanting silk-reeling style, to send *yang* or active energy toward the fingertips.

In contrast, the energy of the left hand moves in direct movement starting from the armpit then moves around (up, down and inward), finally flowing outward in slanting silk-reeling style toward the roots of the fingers as *yin* or passive energy.

In the new style of the posture, both *yin* and *yang* energies merge into one. The torso remains mostly immobile, leading to the position of the left foot in front. In following the movements of the four limbs, the energy accumulated in the chest area flows in direct rotation to form an uninterrupted connection between the *qi* flowing inside and outside. When performing the old style of the posture, the torso makes a half-turn in direct rotation, which results in the left foot being placed in the position behind.

From an internal point of view, the new version of the posture does not yield anything new — energy accumulated in the chest area is concentrated in the back and connected to the energy of the elbow, which is bent at the elbow. This is basically similar to what transpires in the old style of the posture, though the objective of the older version in moving the torso is to attract the opponent to advance further and fall into emptiness. Once this occurs, you will be able to use a force of only four ounces to avert the opponent's momentum of a thousand pounds, neutralizing his speed and capturing his center of movement, redirecting it with literally four ounces of power to deflect the opponent out of the way. Using this technique, one can also balance one though points with only four ounces by pushing or pulling. See the figures of Posture 24[33].

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The previous *Gao Tan Ma* performance refers to hexagram Shi-he (21), the symbol of mastication and punishment by pressing and squeezing, and hexagram Bi (22), the symbol of a distinguishing badge, decoration or rank. This means you have to follow the posture's energy flow internally and externally, up and down, and cannot deviate from this.

5. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

The upper and lower limbs follow each other;
Shifting forward with a turn; do not move too slowly.
Just divide the body's parts into turning and non-turning
To attack the opponent every time with a new technique.

[33] Volume Two.

Posture 58

SLAP ON FOOT WITH CROSSED HAND

Shi-zi Jiao

The *Shi-zi Jiao* posture is similar to the previous Rub Foot (*Zuo You Cha Jiao*) posture performed in the left and right styles, hence the derivation of its name.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

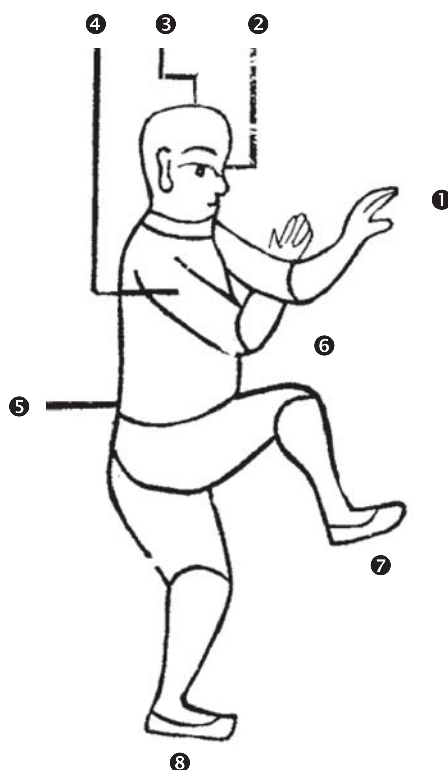


Fig. 3.58.1 Slap on Foot with Crossed Hand (Shi-zi Jiao)

Inscriptions:

- ❶ lean the torso slightly forward;
- ❷ concentrate your attention on the left hand;
- ❸ focus the energy (*jing* essence) at the top of the head;
- ❹ the right forearm rests under the left arm;
- ❺ sink the waist energy downward; lift the right foot up to crotch level;
- ❻ bend the left arm at the elbow and raise the left hand up;
- ❼ flatten the right in-step and bend the right knee;
- ❽ stamp the left sole on the ground.

2. *General description*

After performing the *Gao Tan Ma* posture, step the left foot diagonally forward to the left. At the same time, place the left hand over the abdomen beside the right ribs, while the right hand moves under the left arm with elbow bent to form a cross, palm facing obliquely down. Lift the right foot up and draw a circle to the left then right, kicking in semi-lotus style with the right toes, and simultaneously slapping the right in-step with the left fingers.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

First, the right hand uses the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration in direct rotation to coil energy from the armpit toward the roots of the fingers after it takes position beside the left ribs with the back of the hand facing up. The left hand applies the silk-reeling method in reverse rotation, coiling toward the roots of the fingers and upward. The right arm hangs under the left arm with the right hand lifted up. The right foot makes a semi-lotus gesture to kick in a circle from left to right. Meanwhile, the left hand moves from right to left to slap the right in-step horizontally. After slapping the right toes with the left fingers, the left hand continues to move

leftward to ward against the opponent approaching from the left side, while the right foot continues moving rightward to fend against potential attacks from the right.

If the simultaneous slap and kick has no significant effect on the opponent, place the right foot on the ground after these moves and try jutting your shoulder or elbow abruptly forward at the opponent's chest. Make sure both your hands are spread open when doing this after the *Shi-zi Jiao* movement.

4. *Diagram of the internal power of both hands*

To use the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration with both hands, stretch the arms out to allow energy to flow from the armpits toward the fingertips, coiling it from outside in to attract the opponent's further advance into emptiness. Then coil in reverse direction, running the energy from the fingertips to the finger roots, then back to the shoulders and armpits.

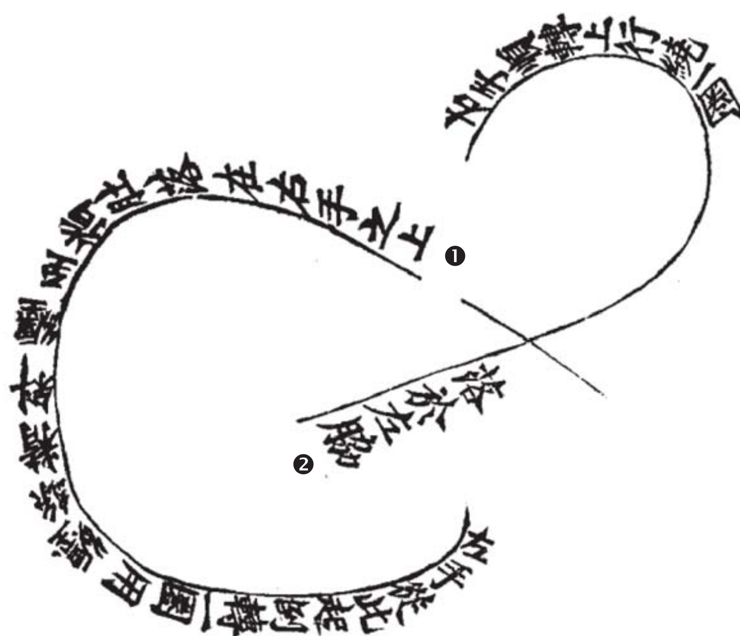


Fig. 3.58.2 The internal power of both hands

Inscriptions:

❶ The left hand starts circling in reverse direction from this point, reeling toward the fingertips above the right forearm;

❷ The right hand draws a circle in direct rotation up to the place beside the left ribs.

The energy of the whole body (*jing* essence) is released outward from the Dan-tian through the offensive technique called *Fa*. Re-accumulate internal energy through the Dan-tian, using your mind/heart as the ruler in its appropriate place in the center, a condition otherwise known as the Extreme Harmony of *Yuan-qi*.

5. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

First, strike a blow at the opponent with the right hand. If she grabs your hand, try to withdraw it and press it to the right side of your torso. This is one of the most difficult moves of the posture. Continue to attack with the left hand to release the opponent's hold on your right hand.

Another vulnerable point of the posture occurs when the left hand hangs above the right forearm, since the opponent can also grasp your left hand at this point. Therefore both your hands need to form a cross to support each other while hitting in sequence, first with your right, then with your left. Otherwise, you will provide the opponent with the opportunity to grasp your arms and thus control you body movement.

The deadlock which forms when the opponent grasps your arms resembles a cross, suggesting the encountering of one difficulty after another. Therefore this posture is associated with hexagram Jian (39) which symbolizes obstacles and difficulty. However, the Book of Changes offers a solution: "Advantage will be found in advancing to the southwest." Hence step the left foot southwest and flatten the sole on the ground. From Jian's

(39) lowest divided line, we learn that "advance on the part of its subject will lead to greater difficulties, while returning to the stationary will afford ground for praise." The third undivided line confirms this, showing its subject "advancing, but only to greater difficulties. He returns to his former associates." Hence only with sincerity in your heart will you be able to obtain peace and tranquility in self-defense.

The fifth undivided line of Jian (39) shows its subject "struggling with the greatest difficulties, while his friend (the second line) comes to help him." This means that, if necessary, the right foot kick in a semi-lotus gesture may be used to release both hands from the opponent's grasp. Indeed, by all means slap on your right toes or use the shoulder/elbow-stroke in the left or right styles consecutively to defeat the opponent and gain victory.

Hence it is said that although "the subject of the line (the ruler) struggles with the greatest difficulties, his loyal minister and close friend comes to help him," as he is in the Golden Mean, and thus possesses the requisite virtues. This means that the shoulders, elbows, hands and feet integrate with the whole body to provide support to any part needing help, to prevent it from falling into the difficulties signified by hexagram Jian (39). The topmost divided line of Jian (39) affirms this, showing its subject "going forward, only to increase in difficulties, while his return to the subject of the line below will be productive and of great merit. Thus, there will be good fortune."

6. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

Hands crossed to both sides: one is longer but the other shorter;
Thus you can defend yourself from all sides, up and down.
If grabbed by the hand, just try to clasp it to your chest:
In difficulty soldiers try to gather around the command post.
Who can discern that *Taiji* movements have no fixed orientation,
As well as numerous techniques stored in your bosom?
Where the mountains and rivers end there are still roads;
Strike with bowed shoulder to break through the bronze wall.
If you do not succeed in striking the enemy's body, lean on it;
Though there is a pearl, it is nearly impossible to make it shine.
Yuan-qi lies hidden in the wonderful formula:
If dying of hunger, go and catch a hare; be swift as a hawk in flight.
With just six feathers a hawk pursues and swoops down,
But why is the hare always in panic?
Commander Cao Cao burned the supplies of the troops
To force his men to fight more desperately;
He who escapes from glory in the battlefield plots a secret plan.
Wisdom is not obliged to provide you with everything,
So try to use your chance on the spot, then and there,
To take advantage of the readiness that ensures your safety.
In common situations show common skills;
Be always sincere with others; never be untrue to yourself —
This is the most inspiring saying I have ever heard.

Posture 59

PUNCH TO CROTCH

Zhi Dang Chui

The *Zhi Dang Chui* posture shares some similarities with three other postures: *Er Qi Jiao, Jin-ji Du Li* and *Chao Tian Deng*. While *Er Qi Jiao* comprises a kick with the right toes to the opponent's chin, the *Zhi Dang Chui* posture is composed of a downward punch to the crotch. And in contrast to the knee kick to the crotch of *Jin Ji Du Li*, the *Zhi Dang Chui* posture punches the crotch with the right fist. If all these strikes are executed precisely in one fluid movement, success is assured.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

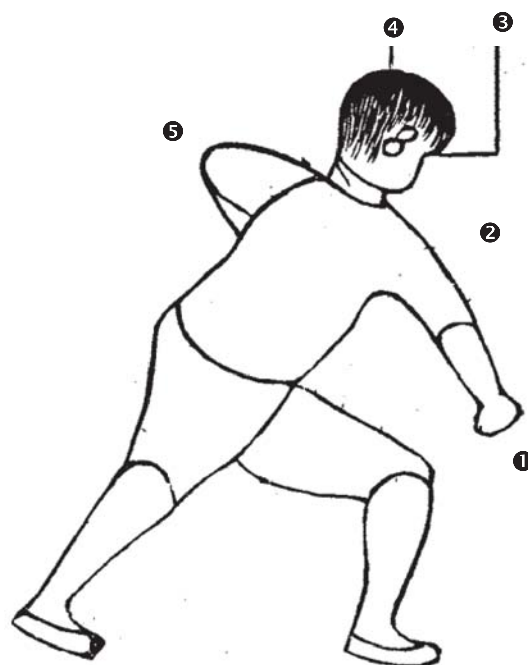


Fig. 3.59.1 Side view of Punch to Crotch (Zhi Dang Chui)

Inscriptions:

❶ clench the right palm into a fist and punch to the scrotum area;

❷ lean forward and close the chest to accumulate the energy;

❸ look directly at the opponent's crotch;

❹ focus the energy at the top of the head;

❺ place the left hand behind the torso with the left arm stretched or bent at the back; if you bend the left arm at the elbow, you should bunch the fingertips and point them up; if you decide to stretch out the left arm, clench the palm into a fist.



Fig. 3.59.2 Front view of Punch to Crotch (Zhi Dang Chui)

Inscriptions:

❶ set the front left foot firmly on the ground;

❷ round-in the crotch;

❸ stamp the rear right foot firmly on the ground with the right heel digging into the ground.

2. *General description*

The preceding *Shi-zi Jiao* posture requires the left foot to be stepped forward and slightly to the left (southwest), while the right foot kicks in the semi-lotus style. After the right toes are slapped, the right foot swings like a pendulum to turn backward in direct movement, while the torso draws a semi-circle.

Then, as the right foot drops down, take a wide diagonal step left with the left foot. The left hand moves left in a brush-knee gesture and behind the torso with palm facing up beside the left ribs. When the left heel settles onto the ground, move the right hand downward to the left behind the left ribs before ascending again. Then, as you turn forward, punch your right fist to the opponent's crotch — punch decisively and vigorously to defeat your opponent in one blow.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

After placing the left heel on the ground, flatten the sole firmly and readjust the heel quickly to turn the toes inward. To perform this stance properly, sit slightly down on the right hipbone to spread energy equally between the rear right leg and the front left leg, as if balancing a pin in the navel.

Thus the left foot rotates in direct movement, the left knee bending slightly at 2-3 cm. In the preceding *Shi-zi Jiao* posture, the left leg plays the supporting role, bearing all the body's weight as the torso turns in reverse direction while the right foot moves horizontally in semi-lotus style before kicking up and forward. In contrast, for the current *Zhi Dang Chui* posture, the left foot steps forward while the left hand moves in a brush-knee gesture to the left and back, reeling energy in reverse direction using the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration to send energy toward the fingers. When the right foot stamps on the ground, the right hand also applies the silk-reeling method in reverse direction to reel energy back to the armpit. As

the right hand moves forward from behind, the energy coils from the armpit toward the fist. At the same time, the whole body's force and spirit is concentrated in the punch, the back of the right hand facing up, knuckles down. Make sure you are sufficiently close to the opponent to land the punch to his crotch effectively — if your the opponent's crotch is too far out-of-reach, the force and spirit of your whole body will dissipate on the way to the target.

The right hand applies the same reverse coiling method of energy regeneration as the *Lou-xi Ao-bu* posture. However, the difference lies in the movement of the right hand: for *Lou-xi Ao-bu*, it moves directly forward from its position behind until it stops in front of the chest; for the current *Zhi Dang Chui* posture, the right hand moves obliquely forward from behind to hit the opponent at the crotch. Also, whilst the energy quality for both postures are similar for the most part, this changes slightly in the different executions of the final movement: *Lou-xi Ao-bu* finishes with the right palm closing up, fingers bunched together and pointing up, while *Zhi Dang Chui* finishes with the right hand clenched in a fist punching downward. The movement of the left hand is identical in both postures, with energy reeled in reverse direction.

4. *Movements of the Zhi Dang Chui posture*

Fig. 3.59.3 is oriented west, so the practitioner faces west within the same space limits used in the preceding *Shi-zi Jiao* posture.

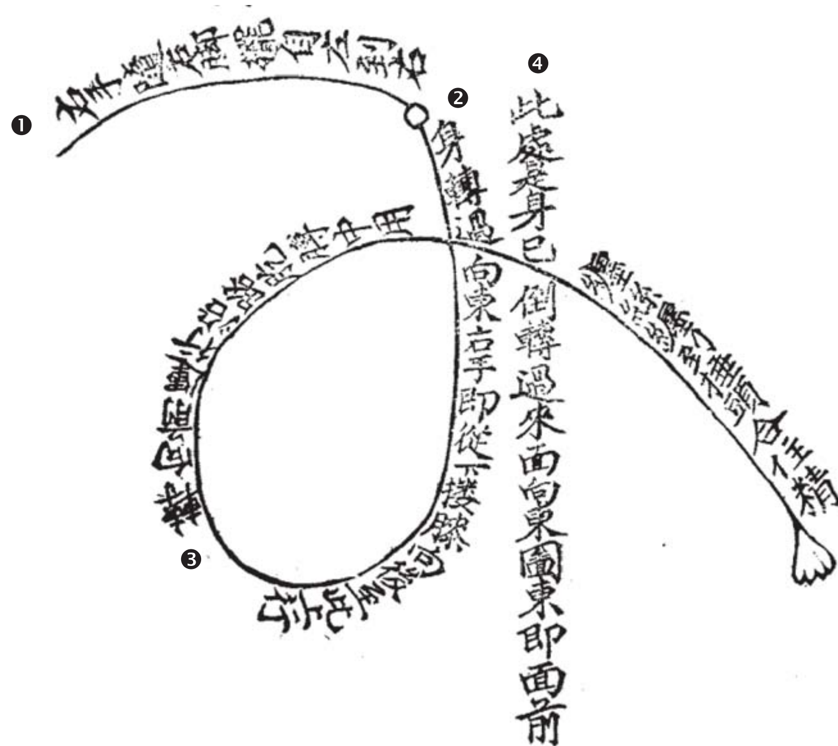


Fig. 3.59.3 Movements of the Zhi Dang Chui posture

Inscriptions:

- ❶ after slapping on the right toes, the right hand continues to move from left to right;
- ❷ the torso turns eastward, while the right hand brushes the knee and moves backward to rise up after reaching this point;
- ❸ turn forward to move energy along the right arm for the punch, using the silk-reeling method;
- ❹ at this place the torso has turned eastward; the figure supposes that you face the east.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The *Zhi Dang Chui* posture comprises of a right fist punch. In accordance with the saying, "A great fruit is not edible," this posture is associated with hexagram Bo (23), the symbol of erosion, falling and destruction. While the preceding *Shi-zi Jiao* posture denotes peril, the current *Zhi Dang Chui* offers a way out of difficult situations by overcoming external obstacles. Hence this posture is also allocated to hexagram Jie (40), the symbol of overcoming and deliverance.

The explanation for hexagram Jie (40) states: "In Jie we have the trigram expressing peril[34], which moves on to express movement[35]. Movement means there is an escape from peril — this is the meaning of Jie." When undivided (strong) and divided (weak) lines are matched to each other, they are placed in the central positions of the upper and the lower trigrams, signifying that the difficulties of situation will be overcome naturally. Occasional meetings with misfortune are normal, so the posture is also associated with Fu (24), the symbol of return and reconstruction. In accordance with the Golden Mean, everything returns to its source, so it is stated in the Book of Changes that, "In seven days he will return and repeat his proper course." When hexagram Pi (12) or troubled times culminate, this signals that the peaceful and successful conditions indicated by hexagram Tai (11), are just around the corner.

[34] the lower water trigram.
[35] the upper thunder trigram.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

Numerous enemies surround you with their aggression —
It is almost impossible to break down the surrounding ring;
With the left arm and right foot sweep away all the three troops,
Then turn around to issue a blow straight down to the ground at the crucial point
To lead all demons into confusion for a long long time.

Verse 2

There are a lot of painful spots around the body,
But one of them is a particularly painful zone — the crotch.
Can you enter the tiger's den to reach the tiger's cub?
A hero is frequently instructed not to be a hero.

6. *The dividing line between the two postures*

The *Zhi Dang Chui* posture is followed by *Qing Long Chu Shui*[36]. Although the latter has its own name, it is, in fact, the second half of *Zhi Dang Chui* posture, which lasts until *Dan Bian* commences. As such, *Qing Long Chu Shui* should not be treated as a separate posture, but as the second half of *Zhi Dang Chui*; or conversely, *Zhi Dang Chui* may be considered the first half of *Qing Long Chu Shui*.

Fig. 3.60.1 which follows shows that the farthest source of *Qing Long Chu Shui*'s internal power springs from acupoint Pu-can, located below the anklebone. This internal power flows in reverse movement up to acupoint Fu-fen at the 2nd vertebra in the upper back, then onto the right fingers. To view the posture from the right side, see Fig. 3.60.2.

[36] The 'Green Dragon Out of the Water' posture.

Posture 60

Green Dragon out of the Water

Qing Long Chu Shui

Qing Long Chu Shui is very similar to *Yu Nu Chuan Suo*[37]: the right hand moves in direct rotation while the left hand moves in reverse in counter-balance. Unlike *Qing Long* however, *Yu Nu Chuan Suo* comprises of big twists and turns and hence belongs to the category of large-scale body movements. The *Qing Long* posture is also closely associated with the *Chu Shou*[38] and *Zai Shou*[39] postures. *Chu Shou* and *Zai Shou* share a similar nature and many common points, such as having the energy of both arms working in concert, but they differ in the circumstances of expression. However, while both hands in *Chu Shou* and *Zai Shou* are drawn from the outside to be placed in front of the chest, the *Qing Long* posture moves the hands in the opposite direction some distance away from the body.

[37] Posture 41: Fair Lady Works at Shuttles (Volume Three).
[38] Posture 7: Posture of Previous Implication (Volume One)
[39] Posture 9: Second Posture of Implication (Volume One)

1. *Diagram of the posture*

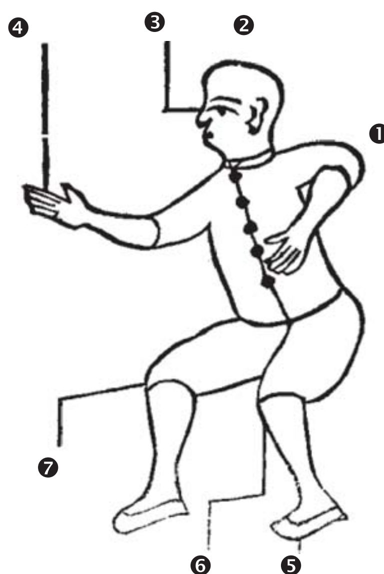


Fig. 3.60.1 Green Dragon Out of the Water (Qing Long Chu Shui)

Inscriptions:

❶ bend the left arm at the elbow and keep the left hand beside the right ribs;

❷ focus the energy at the top of the head to lead the energy of the feet and chest forward so that they cohere with the right shoulder, which is completely relaxed and dropped down;

❸ gaze ahead at the right hand;

❹ bend the right elbow slightly (1-2 cm), but do not stretched the arm out completely; after punching, unclench the right fist, stretch the fingers but keep them stuck together;

❺ following the front right foot, the left foot leaps forward;

❻ guide the power at acupoints Bai-hui and Zhang-qiang by focusing the energy at the top of the head upward so that it leaps forward like a nimble cat pouncing on a mouse; hence the force and spirit should be like a stalking cat, a pure embodiment of emptiness and agility;

❼ bend the right knee to place the right foot forward and form a connection between the right toes, right knee and hand; the force and spirit of the whole body flows straight to the right hand in front.

2. *General description*

The *Zhi Dang Chui* posture is the second half of the *Qing Long Chu Shui* form. After punching to the crotch, first sink the relaxed right shoulder down completely, then the right half of the body. Again, raise the right foot and keep it hanging vertically while the right hand strikes forward like a whip. When striking a whip forward, the whip must first be laid out behind you. In the same fashion, the right hand must be moved back in a large circle before striking forward with a skip on the right foot. The torso then follows the right hand and moves forward, demonstrating the leading role of the right hand in this gesture.

Acupoints located on the right foot, such as Yin-bai, Da-dun, Li-dui, Qiao-yin and Xia-xi, all generate power. This power originates from acupoint Yong-quan at the center of the right sole and moves toward the heel, then up in reverse rotation along the calf toward acupoints Wei-zhong, Yin-men, Cheng-fu and Huan-tiao, to ascend the nearby line of acupoints consisting of Hun-men, Bo-hu and Fu-fen. Next, the power moves obliquely toward acupoints Qu-yuan, Xiao-hai, Zhi-gou and Yang-chi, before entering the opened palm, to finally reach the out-stretched fingers, which are stuck together.

The right arm leads the whole body forward, while the rear left foot stamps firmly on the ground behind the right foot. At the same time, the left hand moves forward to the front of the right nipple, coming to a rest behind the right hand.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

The right half of the body regenerates energy in direct rotation, toward the right and from inside out. This means that the right arm uses the silk-reeling method of coiling energy from inside out, starting from the armpit to the roots of the fingers. At the same time, the right foot rotates energy directly upward until it reaches the crotch, then up to acupoint Fu-fen and

the right armpit, then coils diagonally along the arm until it reaches the roots of the fingers. To equilibrate against the right body's energy movement forward, the left hand and left foot must also rotate energy in reverse direction using the silk-reeling method.

In fact, all this energy flow is driven by your mind/heart, which gathers and concentrates energy at the top of the head, to guide Dan-tian energy upward so as to provide the right half of the body with adequate energy. The right foot's forward skip and the digging of the heel and sole into the ground serve to stimulate the whole body's accumulated energy and activate any stored force. This is the method used to unify *shen* (spirit) and *qi* into one refined substance to be used for attacking forward. The highly refined energy is released through the right hand, supported by the left hand behind. The right hand's forward spiraling of energy resembles a rooster overtaking quails, or a goshawk pouncing on a hare, where volition transforms into the fixed attention of spirit to make soul energy advance forward extremely quickly and steadily.

While the leaping technique employed in the *Yu Nu Chuan Suo* posture is used to gain as much distance ahead as possible, the *Qing Long Chu Shui* posture is used to accumulate sufficient strength to obtain fresh and carefree energy in order to achieve true lightness and agility, instead of transforming it into greater effort and power. The right foot's skip forward must be taken emphatically, the right heel and sole stamping firmly on the ground.

4. Diagram of the right hand moving forward



Fig. 3.60.2 Diagram of the right hand moving forward

Inscriptions:

- ❶ this figure depicts the right hand moving forward; the right foot has to move ahead in the same path and with the same timing for bursting energy;
- ❷ moving swiftly and powerfully forward, the right hand draws a large circle in direct movement; once the right foot stamps on the ground, push the hand out and stretch the arm.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

The dragon hides in the deep waters to cultivate Thusness;
It is like a worm which has to contract before stretching.
When it thunders in the heavens, the world shakes;
You need tremendous energy to leap up from a deep pond.

Verse 2

Turn the torso left and upward to strike forward without pause,
Like a dragon which leaves the spring waters;
Rising high into the air to soar in the clear sky,
Leaving the colourful clouds far behind you.

Posture 61

SINGLE WHIP

Dan Bian

This seventh performance of *Dan Bian* is associated with the image of hexagram Fu (24), which states that "in seven days he will return and repeat his proper course." This means that the subject of the figure will return after executing six positions, as his rhythm is very taut.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

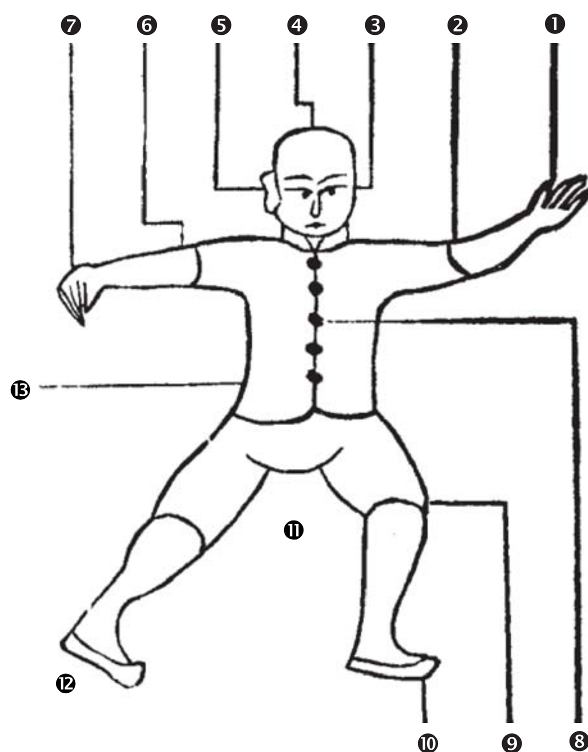


Fig. 3.61.1 Single Whip (Dan Bian)

Inscriptions:

❶ keep the left fingers stuck together;

❷ hang the left elbow tip downward;

❸ sink the relaxed left shoulder down and look at the middle finger of the left hand;

❹ focus the energy at the top of the head;

❺ relax the right shoulder and listen to the situation behind you;

❻ hang the right elbow tip downward;

❼ bunch up the fingertips of the right hand and turn them downward from the wrist to form a hook hand gesture;

❽ close the chest;

❾ bend the left knee;

❿ turn the left toes inward in the shape of Chinese character 'eight' (八); flatten the left sole completely on the ground;

⓫ open and round-in the crotch area;

⓬ bend the right knee (2-3 cm); dig the right heel into the ground; the right foot forms a 'hook foot' with toes pointing forward;

⓭ sink the waist energy downward from the left and right sides.

2. *General description*

For both arms, hands and thighs, feel the coil of energy flowing from outside in when accumulating or closing. Then move the left hand to the left from the front of the right ribs by drawing the left arm forward with the fingers stuck together. At the same time, step the left foot to the left to form a left bow step[40]. Move the right hand forward in a small circle before forming a hook hand, pointing the bunched fingertips downward. Connect the energy of both hands to integrate the upper body into a single unit. Form a right hook foot with toes pointing left. Both feet work in concert with the knees while the crotch remains rounded-in and opened to allow energy flow[41].

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

To connect the energy of both hands, use the silk-reeling method to send energy outside the shoulder inward, then along the forearms to the fingertips. Next, draw the left hand upward in a small circle from its position below, moving it slowly to the left by extending the left arm forward with fingers stuck firmly together. Use the silk-reeling method to rotate energy directly from inside out, toward the left fingers.

Rotate the right hand moderately quickly in a small circle, reeling energy in reverse direction from outside the shoulder inward toward the right fingertips. Once both feet form an energy connection, the energy starts to run in reverse reeling from outside the toes of both feet inward, then up both legs to the crotch. Following the movement of the left hand, the left foot takes a step leftward in direct rotation of a small circle; the energy coils outward from the crotch and down toward the toes of both feet. Then turn the left toes slightly inward in the shape of the Chinese character 'eight' (八). Press the Da-dun acupoint of the big left toe on the ground and form a hook

[40] This means that the front leg is bent at the knee while the rear leg is extended, though not completely.
[41] For further details see comments to the previous *Dan Bian* performance (Posture 55).

foot with the rear right foot, toes pointing forward. Hence the energy of the whole body coils from outside in, to close or accumulate energy inward and avoid energy dissipation outward.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The upper body is empty to reflect the image of its associated trigram *Li* (fire). The lower body is solid, reflecting the image of the *Kan* (water) trigram, hence its allocation to *Kan*. The relationship between *Li* and *Kan*, *Qian* and *Kun* corresponds to the relationship between the second daughter and the second son. Water and fire interact with each other to return to *Qian* and *Kun*, which are the parents of all myriad things and deeds under the sky, and hence the origin of all postural images. Notwithstanding differences in interpretation, these postural images should not go beyond the framework of *Qian*, *Kun*, *Kan* and *Li*. Accordingly, all previous six performances of *Dan Bian* have been executed within the framework of these four integral figures.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

The first *Dan Bian* is allocated to water and fire;
The second performance refers to *Kan* and *Li*.
The third one correlates with Zhen (51) and Wu-wang (25);
The fourth *Dan Bian* relates to Kan (29) and Li (30) again.
The fifth posture corresponds to Jin (35) and Zhen (51),
While the sixth one to the central lines of *Kan* and *Li*.
The seventh *Dan Bian* refers to *Qian*, *Kun*, *Kan* and *Li*,
Nothing is left beyond this all-embracing image indeed.

VERSE 2

The seventh Single Whip tends to return to the ancestral temple,
Yi Tang She[42] is like a double *Dan Bian*;
Who knows when to descend and ascend?
It depends on the style and height of the opponent's stance.
Continue to thread your way through different images,
Manipulating them according to your needs;
Invite the superior person to inspect your posture's tracing.
Transformations of *yin* and *yang* are actually indefinable;
Qian, Kun, Kan and *Li* contain absolutely all and everything.

VERSE 3

East is balanced with west through the *Dan Bian* technique;
Movement to the left and right remains the mystery
Of all mysteries — the power emerges from the bottom of heart.
The surface of the thighs and arms is covered with coiling energy;
Oblique reeling in direct and reverse movements is inherent in the posture.
Be able to bear the shallow and the deep to study both states carefully;
Learning martial arts skills takes a long time indeed,
But the day will come when you attain the enlightenment of *Taijiquan*.
The human body consists of *Taiji* motifs and diagrams:
Now in movement, now at rest — all body parts and structures
blend into one integral whole called the Body.
If you wish to blend completely and attain the original image of chaos,
Manipulation of threes and fives reflects the brightness of the full moon,
Which shines on all myriad things under heaven.
Only non-existence can escape from what we see and hear at the moment;
When to clench and when to release — it depends on you;
Be clear and logical on the journey toward realization of the original spring.

[42] The 'Crouch Step Like a Snake Creeping Out of a House' posture.

Posture 62

GROUND COVERED WITH BROCADE

Pu Di Jin

Pu Di Jin is the first half of the next posture, *Shang-bu Qi Xing*[43]. Conversely, *Shang-bu* could be considered the second half of *Pu Di Jin*.

The *Shang-bu* posture requires the hands and feet to work together to mirror the seven stars of the universe, hence the origin of its name. As the first half of *Shang-bu*, *Pu Di Jin* requires the bent left arm to move the left hand upward in the shape of the Dipper, hence the reference to 'Seven Stars of the Dipper'.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

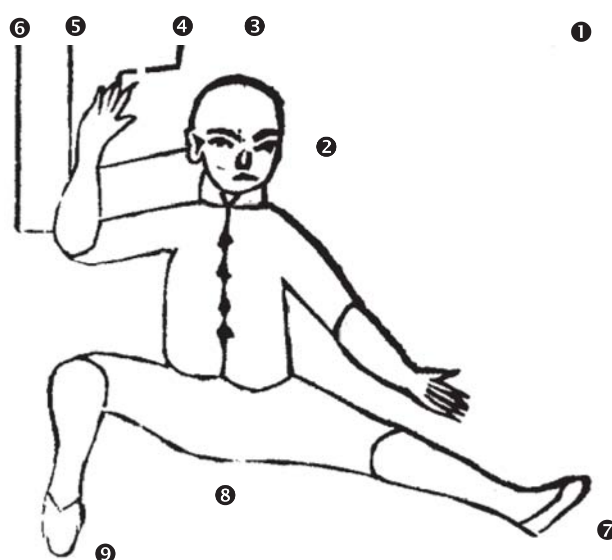


Fig. 3.62.1 Ground Covered with Brocade (Pu Di Jin)

[43] The 'Step Up to Form Seven Stars of the Dipper' posture.

Inscriptions:

❶ the crotch drops to the level of the ground;
❷ look ahead at the left hand and left foot;
❸ focus the energy at the top of the head;
❹ clench the right palm into a fist;
❺ listen to the situation behind your body;
❻ bend the right arm and hang the right elbow tip downward in the image of the Dipper;
❼ draw the left foot forward and place the heel on the ground; raise the body up by flattening the left sole on the ground and digging the toes firmly in;
❽ sink the buttocks and acupoint Hui-yin downward, pushing Hui-yin slightly forward;
❾ stamp the right foot on the ground; when rising up, move the waist forward and raise the torso by extending the right knee and digging the right heel into the ground;
❿ bend the right knee and lift it up.

2. General description

Clench the right hand into a fist and bend the right elbow. Lower your buttocks to the ground as much as possible. Extend the left arm forward and parallel to the left leg, while the crotch drops to the level of the ground. Dig the right heel into the ground and lift the right knee up. Shift most of the body weight onto the right thigh. Stamp the big toe and heel firmly on the ground, digging the right toes in.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

While raising the right up upward, move energy in direct rotation, reeling obliquely from the palm toward the armpit, then to the outside of the shoulder. From the shoulder, continue using the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration to reel energy to the back and along the right half of the waist, down to the left buttock and left thigh and finally to the left toes. Energy flow here is in the completely opposite direction to that of the *Qing Long Chu Shui* posture, where energy flow springs upward from the foot to hand. In contrast, energy flows here from the right hand down to the left foot. The left hand then uses the energy to move forward.

Fig. 3.62.2 illustrates the application of energy after rising from the lower sitting position. Fig. 3.62.3 depicts the position of the left buttock and thigh 'dropping' to the ground in a lower stance. Thus, the latter diagram actually precedes the former.

a) Diagram of the position of both legs in the lower stance



Fig. 3.62.2 Application of energy after rising from the sitting position

Inscriptions:

- The left knee points up; both feet are connected energetically with each other as the figure regards the position of the left foot. The left thigh 'drops' on the ground in the lower stance; the right foot turns inward with its heel digging into the ground; after rising up, the right knee and heel, left toes and heel all work in concert with each other; use the strength of the whole body to raise it up.

B) Diagram of the application of energy after rising from the sitting position

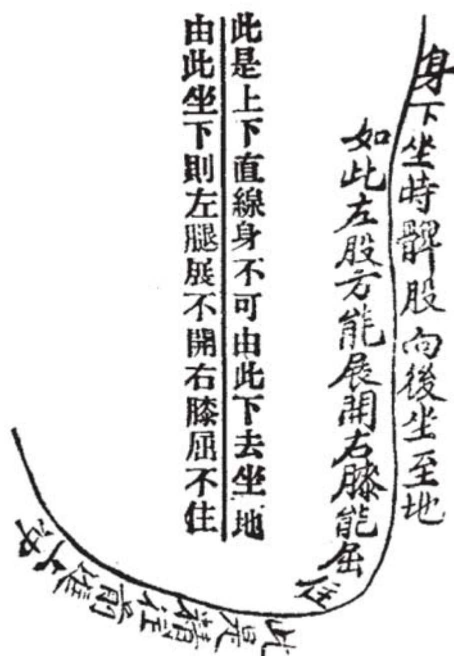


Fig. 3.62.3 Position of both legs in the lower stance

Inscriptions:

- Sit on the ground at the position under the vertical dividing line. Stretch the left leg out and place the right knee forward, as it remains on the left side of the dividing vertical line depicted in the figure. While sinking the body down, sit on the left buttock with the thigh touching the ground. From this position, energy flows forward on impact, thus enabling the left leg to be stretched forward and the right knee to be placed ahead.

The *Pu Di Jin* posture shares the same techniques as *Yi Tang She*[44]. In *Yi Tang She*, the body soars and hangs in mid-air before dropping on the ground with the right foot tucked under the right thigh. The right leg stamps on the ground with a sound like metal clanging on stone. The left foot kicks with the heel and sole to strike the opponent's shank. The right

[44] Posture 46: Crouch Step Like a Snake Creeping Out of a House (Volume Three).

arm extends outward and upward, while the left arm pushes forward to penetrate the opponent's torso. The right knee and fist can also be used to hit forward after rising up. The left leg is stretched out along the ground.

If both hands do not succeed in deterring the opponent, press both palms down on the ground on the right and use them as a pivot together with the right foot to execute a revolving-leg gesture aimed at striking the opponents' shanks from all sides. Alternatively, you can transition from this lower position into the upper stance of the *Jin Ji Du Li*[45] form to kick forward with your right knee. While rising up to make the *Jin Ji Du Li* stance, use the left leg to support the right knee's lift upward to kick forward. At the same time, attack the opponent's chin with your right hand, dropping your left hand down in counter-balance. Conversely, the right hand moves down when the left hand is raised in attack to maintain balance between the upper and lower body. These are moves shared with the *Er Qi Jiao* posture. Then, after soaring into the air, the body drops to the ground to re-establish equilibrium between up and down.

Another name for the *Pu Di Jin* posture is *Pu Di Ji*[46], based on the hot-tempered rooster's way of cooling down by lying on the ground and stretching its left wing. The posture mimics this image by extending the left leg outwards and spreading both arms sideways at the same time.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

Figure *Xun* (wind) is associated with the rooster and the nature of the rooster is to contest opponents, hence its use in cockfighting and image as an aggressive bird. Consequently, both hands are stretched out in imitation of a fighting rooster spreading its wings, or alternatively, of a hen sitting down to hatch its eggs. Hence the posture's association with hexagram Xun (57), the symbol of flexibility and bending to enter. In the human body, this quality corresponds to the thigh. So, sit down with the left buttock and thigh on the ground, stretch the left leg forward in the image of

[45] The 'Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg' posture.
[46] Literally translated as 'Ground Covered with Rooster', as opposed to 'brocade'.

a bird's wing, while the torso 'sinks' as though into a pit or a pool of water, symbolizing peril.

The subject of Xun "worships beneath the altar of the spirits of earth and grain," as reflected in the central position of the upright torso between the left and right legs. The fact that the torso sits on the ground is indicated by the *Xun* hexagram, formed by the wind trigram placed over wood, or conversely, wood over wind. The lowest divided line of Xun (57) shows its subject "making no headway" as his mind is perplexed. "It would be advantageous for him to have the firm correctness of a brave soldier," which would then make his mind well governed. As such, stretch the left arm and bend the right one to express the image of a brave soldier associated with this posture.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

Without any pushing from the outside
You drop your body down! Why?
Is there any sense sitting in the dust?
Disturb the opponent from below
But defeat him from above —
This is what a noble man should know.
Dive deeper and get the pearl
To pose as a hero and great talent.

Verse 2

Encountering a superior opponent,
Take a Crouch Step and kick without mercy;
This sitting posture is used to scare him by dusting.
He knows how hard it is to be defended
Against the revolving-leg technique,
But how to count the Seven Stars
Illuminated on the Jade Dipper Stick?

Posture 63

STEP UP TO FORM SEVEN STARS OF THE DIPPER

Shang-bu Qi Xing

The *Shang-bu Qi Xing* posture ends with the same pestle-hand gesture employed in *Jin-gang Dao Dui*[47].

1. *Diagram of the posture*

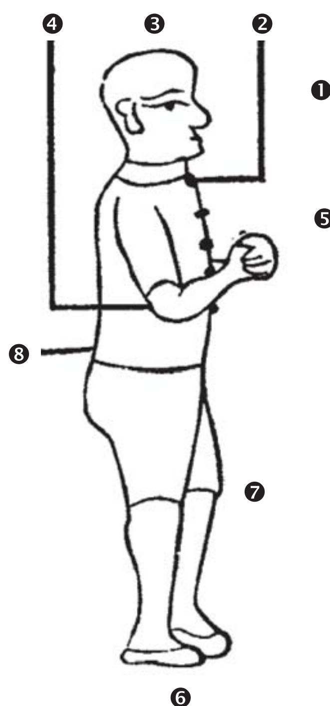


Fig. 3.63.1 Step Up to Form Seven Stars of the Dipper (Shang-bu Qi Xing)

[47] Postures 1, 4, 12: Buddha's Warrior Attendant Pounds with Pestle (Volume One).

Inscriptions:

❶ look straight ahead, cupping the right hand in the left palm in front of the chest, left wrist facing up and right elbow tip hanging down;

❷ relax the right shoulder;

❸ focus the energy at the top of the head; calm your mind/heart and send *qi* back to the DAN-TIAN while listening to the situation behind you; sink the relaxed right shoulder down and hold the right fist in the left hand;

❹ drop the right elbow down;

❺ close the chest to create an energy connection with the right thigh; slightly bend the right knee about 1-2 cm, otherwise the connection between the knee and crotch energy will not be properly established;

❻ flatten both feet on the ground;

❼ the left leg is slightly bent although it appears to be straight;

❽ sink waist power downward.

2. *General description*

After penetrating forward, the left hand circles up until it stops in front of the chest, wrist facing up. Meanwhile, the right hand moves forward and up from behind in direct circular rotation, palm clenched into a fist and drops as a hammer into the left hand, knuckles facing obliquely up. Turn the left toes inward to connect with the top energy so as to raise the body from its lower stance — the knee and foot of the supporting right leg work together with the left heel to raise the body up. After this, circle the rear right foot forward and set it on the ground beside the left foot.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

While standing up, apply the internal power of the whole body in the same style as the preceding three performances of *Jin-gang Dao Dui*. This means that *qi* energy must be returned to the DAN-TIAN. Calm the mind/heart and harmonize the energy in order to return to the original condition of the *Taiji* motif.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The *Shang-bu Qi Xing* hit is performed in the same manner as the preceding three *Jin-gang Dao Dui* postures, with one significant difference: while the *Jin-gang Dao Dui* postures are used to disperse all surrounding things by releasing energy outward from its original source in opening, the *Shang-bu Qi Xing* posture returns all things to their origin in closing. This is surmised at the very beginning of the *Zhong-yong* or the Treatise of the Golden Mean: "The heavenly way is to disperse sunlight for the myriad things", and at the end: "There are no sounds or odors in the heavens…" In this sense, *Shang-bu Qi Xing* is a way of bringing all body structures and organs to a close.

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

Verse 1

> The *Taiji* circuit is like a hold-ball gesture:
> Now full and now empty; now growing and now declining —
> Wave-like transformations. But who would know
> That every single case springs from this one?
> When you master some magic techniques,
> All stupid men want to watch it.

Verse 2

> One and all possess the *Taiji* motif,
> But does it mean that you obtain *gong-fu*?
> Only through long and daily practice
> You cannot be slack or sluggish any longer.
> After skillful management of the circle,
> The mechanism will run naturally.

Verse 3

Kick with the foot and punch with the fist in the lower stance —
With a magic hand there is no place where its skill is not proven.
Let me be surrounded by numerous opponents from all sides
And my body will rise up completely, peak after peak.
There is no place in my body where the *Taiji* motif does not work:
My no-minded mind produces transformations
In the likeness of a perfectly round pearl — touch it,
And you will be met with a crushing rebuff.
Still, I do not understand this mystery, the mystery of all mysteries.
My mind is always coming back to No Extremes[48],
Where it is refined to the pure state of a buddha
Embodied in the image of a lotus flower.
Yet, even if you attain this stage of *gong-fu*, it is not the end;
Everything you wish from the bottom of your heart
Can be granted to you from above by the heavens.

[48] Wuji.

Posture 64

CROUCH STEP ASTRIDE THE TIGER

Xia-bu Kua Hu

Xia-bu Kua Hu shares a number of similarities with *Lou-xi Ao-bu*. There are, however, some small distinctions: whilst both postures have the right hand is placed in front while the left hand behind, for *Xia-bu*, the right hand is placed upward while the left hand down. Moreover, while *Lou-xi Ao-bu* consists of a bow step forward, *Xia-bu* requires the left foot to withdraw and take an empty step beside the supporting right foot.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

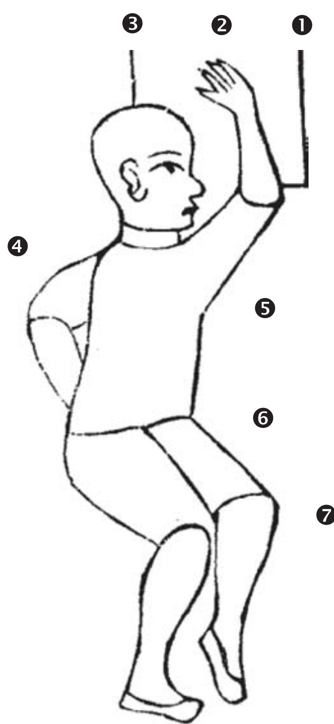


Fig. 3.64.1 Crouch Step Astride the Tiger (Xia-bu Kua Hu)

Inscriptions:

❶ hang the right elbow tip at head level;

❷ raise the right arm; keep the right fingers stuck together and concentrate your attention on the right hand;

❸ focus the energy at the top of the head to lead the energy of the rest of the body upward;

❹ place the left hand behind in a hook hand gesture, fingertips pointing backward and up; bend the left elbow so that the inside of the elbow forms a bow; open the crotch as if astride a tiger;

❺ close the chest and create an energy connection with the knee of the supporting right leg; flatten the right sole on the ground;

❻ keep the crotch rounded-in and sink its energy downward, as if riding on the tiger's back;

❼ sink waist energy downward; bend the left knee and touch the ground; put the left buttock and left thigh outwards.

2. *General description*

Part both hands from their cupped position in front of the chest so that the right hand moves back in a reverse circle, then turns forward and upward to pass beside the right cheek. At the same time, the left hand moves down in a circle, elbow bent, to take its position behind the body on the left.

Next, take a wide step back with the right foot, bending the right knee, while the left foot lies flat on the ground. Then the left foot follows the right, takes a step back to draw on the ground. The feet are about 30 cm apart. Bend the left knee and connect it with the top energy. Sink the crotch energy downward and integrate the energies of the upper and lower body. Close the chest and position the buttocks and thighs outward. Also sink waist energy downward and stick the lower abdomen outward and pull it up. Focus your attention on the middle finger of the right hand.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

a) Diagram of the internal power of both hands and feet

Lift the right hand above the head, sticking the fingers together with the outside edge of the little finger side facing up.

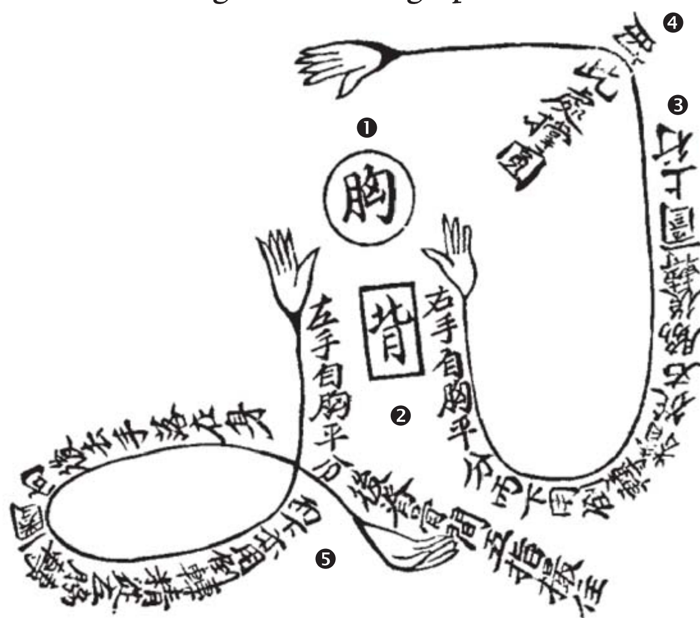


Fig. 3.64.2 Diagram of the internal power of both hands and feet

Inscriptions:

1. chest;
2. back;
3. the right hand moves downward from its preceding position cupped in front of the chest, circling in reverse direction alongside the right ribs before turning upward;
4. at this point bend the right elbow so that the inside of the elbow forms a bow;
5. move the left hand downward from its cupped position in front of chest, applying a reverse rotation of energy; draw a circle backward and down from its position beside the left ribs until it reaches the middle of the small of the back, forming a hook hand gesture with fingertips pointing up;
6. this is the view from behind.

b) Additional diagram



Fig. 3.64.3 Diagram of the internal power of both hands and feet

Inscriptions:

❶ the right foot reels energy in reverse direction toward the crotch;

❷ transverse bone;

❸ the left foot reels energy in reverse rotation toward the crotch;

❹ bend the right knee and flatten the right foot on the ground;

❺ bring both knees toward each other to create an energy connection between them;

❻ to bring crotch energy forward, open and keep the crotch rounded-in;

❼ bend the left knee and touch the left foot on the ground.

When doing the *Xia-bu Kua Hu* posture, the smaller your body movements, the better. Note, however, that your crotch needs to be opened sufficiently wide to allow the body's energy to sink down. Further, the position of the raised right arm should resemble a thousand-pound load hanging over the head. Both arms should be angular externally, with the internal sides forming a bow shape. The force and spirit of the upper and lower body must be accumulated through the energy closing[49], when the upper part becomes empty but the lower one solid and steady. The solid lower body is moved by the 'empty' upper body, which for this case means agility, a quality suggesting obedience and successful negotiation of obstacles.

There are ten errors commonly made in the *Xia-bu Kua Hu* posture:

(1) the right arm should not be completely extended, otherwise it will be almost impossible to protect the head from above;

(2) if the left hand at the rear does not produce energy accumulated through the silk-reeling method, it will be almost impossible to protect your body from behind;

(3) when both feet are placed too close to each other, it is almost impossible to open the crotch;

(4) if the transverse distance between the feet is correct but the toes of both feet turned outward, the crotch area will too inflexible for the body to 'sit down';

(5) 'sitting down' and digging into the ground too abruptly and rigidly could disengage energy at the top of the head from its connection with the energy of the rest of the body, leading to a diminished ability to lead it. This results in the crotch area becoming too opened and stiff. In this case, 'stiff' implies 'dead' while 'dead' signifies immobility, immobility means ineffectiveness and ineffectiveness indicates that the whole process is running in an uncertain and unstable way;

[49] That is, accumulating, not scattering.

(6) if energy at the top of the head[50] guides the energy of both thighs upward without using the silk-reeling method, the crotch will be opened nominally but incorrectly, so that your stance will not be as stable as Mount Taishan;

(7) the force and spirit of the whole body are manifested in your eyes, which indicate your internal power of concentration. So, only when the left hand draws downward and backward to counter-balance the raising of the right hand can you consider the posture to be correctly performed. Simply moving the hands up and down without engaging the mind/heart is to ignore the spiritual substances which should be integrated with the spirit and will, condensing the internal power and protecting it from scattering;

(8) if waist energy does not sink down, *qi* energy cannot return to the Dantian. Under these conditions, energy from acupoints Zhong-ji and Hui-yin will not flow smoothly, resulting in insufficient energy accumulation in the chest area. This will lead to the chest filling up with blocked *qi* which will burst forth in the chest, leading to blockage when moving back and forth. This blockage grips the back in a vice from left and right, compromising its agility. If the chest does not have adequate accumulated energy to move forward, energy in the crotch will become 'shallow', which is insufficient to support the feet. This leads eventually to instability in the soles, while the upper body is not empty enough to move in an agile manner;

(9) if top energy stagnates above and cannot guide lower energy upward, then waist energy cannot sink downward. This means all parts and structures of the body will become disconnected and body movement immobilized;

(10) if waist and crotch energy sink down well but the energy of the buttocks and thighs cannot flow up, this means that the upper and lower body is not engaged in the entire mechanism of *qi* flowing. Hence the soles of the feet become weakened and easily knocked down by external forces.

All these ten errors may manifest in any of the posture's movements, at any level, physical or energetical.

[50] Also known as 'top energy'.

If you are not able to accumulate or close the energy, it is nearly impossible for you to demonstrate agility in your body movements. Lack of agility gives birth to a myriad of illnesses which cannot be helped by good medicine nor doctors. As your condition deteriorates to the point of death, you must realize the origin of your calamities and delusions and get rid of them proactively, without regret. Take this posture as a remedy to help you become engaged in the movement.

If you wish to understand the way energy accumulates through closing, cup both hands in front of the chest, then part them sideways and downward, moving the right hand to the right and the left hand to the left. In other words, place both hands outward and divide them down to each side. The right hand uses the silk-reeling method in reverse rotation to coil energy toward the shoulder. When the right hand moves down and back, passing beside the right ribs, it draws the first half of the circle; the second half of the circle is drawn from behind upward until the arm, bent at the elbow, passes about 15 cm in front of the right cheek. The arm then takes a position above the head, arcing like the shape of a pretty eyebrow. Face the palm obliquely outward with the edge of the little finger pointing up — this is the Shao-yin channel of the heart. Make sure the fingers are stuck together, and that the right wrist faces out while the back of the hand in. Using the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration, coil energy in reverse direction from the shoulder backward to the outside of the fingers.

The left hand moves down from its initial position in front of the chest, and sends energy in reverse direction to the shoulder using the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration. When the left arm passes beside the left ribs, turn the left hand slightly out and forward, then backward again to take a position behind the left ribs. At this point, energy will flow back from the shoulder to the fingers which form a hook hand. The left arm is also bent in a shape of arc, so both hands are connected energetically.

Keep your eyes on the path of the right hand, focusing your attention on the right fingertips. By doing this, you focus your mind/heart on the path of the heart channel, closing the circular movement of energy and allowing

the spirit to return to its source through the eyes, without being dispersed outward. Also focus on energy at the top of the head to allow *Zhong-qi* to rise consciously, keeping the energy flow smooth and preventing blockages at the nape and occipital bone (acupoint Nao-hou).

While all this occurs, your mind should be empty like a 'no-minded mind', always fresh, without attachment or impressions, free from any intention. If you can forget about your mind/heart existence, you will feel energy (*jing* essence) suddenly flowing smoothly at the top of the head and nape (acupoint Hou-ding). This flow must be even, without abrupt peaks and troughs, otherwise the energy may become stuck at the crown of the head. If this happens, it will almost be impossible for the *qi* remaining in the chest to flow downward. To avoid this, you need to stimulate agile and flexible movement of top energy to enable the body to move left and right easily and freely. So always pay attention to the energy accumulated at the crown of the head.

Furthermore, you need to listen to what is happening around you to avert attacks from the left, right or rear. Any rear aggression will certainly be accompanied by sounds, which you should be able to hear before the opponent approaches too close. There are times, however, when the opponent's movements cannot be heard aurally but can be detected by the heart. To do this, your mind/heart and *qi* must be quiet and calm, while your ears remain acutely alert. This stance is known as being "all ears at left and right." As you listen intently with your mind/heart and ears, relax completely and sink both shoulders down to let energy flow up to fill both arms with power so that they may be agile enough to rotate properly. If the shoulders are sufficiently relaxed, you may even hear the energy flow. Hence to allow energy to run freely and fluidly, the areas of energy flow need to be relaxed. Through daily practice, you will be able to achieve both energy flow and relaxation spontaneously. To hollow the chest area so that energy accumulates properly, you need to sink both shoulders and hang the elbow tips downward. Never lift the shoulders as it keeps *qi* blocked in the chest.

For the current *Xia-bu Kua Hu* posture, lift the right elbow up so that the forearm rises above the head to block against an attack from above. The right arm must be in an arc shape, with the side of the little finger facing up to strengthen the position of the left arm. 5 Place the left elbow behind, looking backward to create an energy connection with the right elbow. Stick the right fingers firmly together, lifting the outer edge of the little finger. If the hand position is strong, the right forearm and shoulder will be strong too.

To prevent opponents from grasping your left hand, place it behind the middle of the small of the back like a rear-facing eye, using the hook hand style with fingertips bunched and pointing up. The little finger is linked to the heart channel while the middle finger to the pericardium. This means that you should be able to see or feel what happens behind you with your heart — bunched together, the fingertips join up all the six energy channels of the hand to act as an eye-sensor to watch or feel the situation from behind. The hook hand also blocks any attacks from behind. The left and right hands, in their high and low positions in front and behind, work in concert with each other to merge *qi* up into a whole. These are the main roles of the hands in this posture.

The way the energies of the waist, ribs and upper torso work in this posture can be seen by how energy runs through the energy channels and acupoints. The first line runs from the small of the back up to acupoints Po-hu and Gao-mang, then to the ribs and chest from both sides. This line runs below the armpit through acupoints Yuan-ye and Da-bao, which belong to the triple warmer channel. The second line runs through the other acupoints of the channel, Zhe-jin and Ri-yue, and corresponds to the Shao-yang channel of the triple warmer. The third line connects acupoints Yun-men, Zhong-fu, Shi-dou and Xiong-xiang, and correlates with the lungs and spleen. The fourth line links acupoints Jue-yin, Qi-men and Tian-chi, and is allocated to the liver and gallbladder. The fifth line connecting acupoints Yang-ming, Da-chang, Que-pen, Qi-hu, Liang-men and Guan-men, and corresponds to the intestines and stomach. The sixth line which links

acupoints Shao-yin, Shu-fu, Shen-zang, You-men and Tong-gu is associated with the heart and kidneys.

The central line links acupoints Hua-gai, Zi-gong, Yu-tang, Shan-zhong, Zhong-ting and Jiu-wei. This line then continues to run through Yuan-ye and Da-bao of the left and right ribs, through to You-men and Tong-gu at both sides, then simultaneously toward Yu-tang and Shan-zhong. Thus the ribs of both sides work in concert with each other.

The left and right sides below the waist are used to push *qi* energy toward acupoints Qi-hai, Guan-yuan and Zhong-ji. Energy flows up the flesh of the buttocks and thighs to accumulate crotch power and loosen the ribs. If the waist energy does not sink downward, there will be a lack of strength in the knees and feet. When tucked in, the buttocks provide firmness to the thighs and stability in the stance. When the crossed *qi* of the chest returns to the Dan-tian (locatdion of acupoint Qi-hai), it assumes a *yin* quality and converts solid energy into soft energy.

When the mind/heart is at rest, *qi* is also at peace; if heart energy is released, *qi* rises up to support it. If this type of *qi* is used in good deeds, it turns into *Zhong-qi*; otherwise it transforms into *qi* stuck in the chest.

Qi cannot be purely divided into weak and strong. Instead, it is differentiated into *Zhong-qi* which possesses positive qualites, and over-crossed qi, a rigid energy with negative implications. Energy which flows without deflection or abrupt peaks and troughs is known as *Zhong-qi*, and it takes the form of the *yin* and *yang* of the mind/heart, the true embodiment of *Zheng-qi*. The great Mencius attributes the qualities of morality and justice to *Haoran-zhi Qi*, which is located in the Dan-tian area below the chest. When the mind/heart contains nothing this leads to extreme agility and emptiness of movement. The main mission of the mind/heart is to provide peace and quiet, resulting in an honesty which manifests in harmonious body movement, no matter the myriad transformations and immeasurable changes which occur.

Power in the crotch results from the upper body energy accumulating in the testicles, which sinks down in reflection of the saying, "A weight of a thousand pounds should be dropped down to be a true weight," otherwise solidness turns into emptiness. Therefore true movement should be solid yet empty. If not empty, movements of the upper and lower body cannot be agile. Also, the area of both testicles and both sides of the crotch should be opened. If opened 1 *cun*[51], both knees also become opened at a transverse distance of 1 *chi*[52]. However, if the crotch area is opened too wide at 2 *cun*[53], this 'extreme emptiness' will paradoxically result in a 'lack of emptiness' and conversely, allow solidity to dominate. Over-solidness results in immobility and rigidity of movement.

In contrast, a properly opened crotch can help accumulate energy in the buttocks, which then flows to the lower abdomen to be released. When the lower abdomen is positioned correctly, the crotch will open itself properly — the opening will be narrow like a thread, and provide the appropriate emptiness and roundness to create a full energy connection between both sides internally. In comparison, a crotch opened too widely, that is, wider than the Chinese character for 'man', has a negative effect on the work of the arms. Generally speaking, when the upper body is narrow but the lower body wide open, the problem of a 'bottleneck' is created since the body is neither empty nor round. Though the lower body may be 'opened', this 'opening' is not effective. Hence the function of the crotch is to open the narrow pass between the upper and lower body.

The way energy is applied in the lower body is explained thus: the position of the thighs must be constantly subtly calibrated, internally and externally, in front and behind and in opening and closing, to achieve maximum balance in all these aspects. The knees turn inside to connect energetically at the transverse distance of 1 *chi*. The outside and inside of the calves work in concert to facilitate the flow of energy coiling around upward and

[51] 2.5 cm.
[52] 30 cm.
[53] 5 cm.

downward. The right foot is solid and flattened completely on the ground to provide stable support, while the left foot takes an empty step, toes digging firmly into the ground. The toes and calves are pressed down and turned slightly inward to create an energy connection with the heels. The right digs into the ground. Using the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration, both feet reel energy in reverse direction upward to pass through acupoint Yong-quan toward the calf, coiling from outside in until it reaches the crotch before entering the Dan-tian.

The number of errors that can be revealed in one single posture, as shown on this example, indicate that the positions of the body parts from head to toe are strictly regulated by the rules and standards established by *Taiji* practice. If you are able to correct these errors and improve your postures even beyond established standards, you will attain a high level of accuracy in your own performances, which will transcend any rules and standards.

4. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

The upraised right arm is associated with the topmost undivided strong line of trigram *Li* (fire), while its divided middle line denotes the mind/heart, whose emptiness and brightness reflects the sunrise. The lower body's stance, including the feet and soles digging firmly into the ground and the energy of the Dan-tian, correlate to the bottom line of *Li*. Hence, this is how the entire posture corresponds to Li (30).

5. *Seven-character a line verses dedicated to the posture*

VERSE 1

Move both hands apart to draw semi-circles beside the buttocks;
A hedgehog contracts into the shape of a tiny macaque.
The right arm rises to prop up a mountain peak;
The left arm drops down to be the supportive one
While striding over the tiger, open the crotch area
So a tablet of jade can pass between the roots of the thighs;
Roll up the eyeballs to look at the fingertips high above.
One foot takes a solid step, the other is empty;
Turn the body in an agile movement
As an example to the young ones.

VERSE 2

The opponent, strong as Mount Taishan, presses with both hands,
Forcing you to retreat with your right arm drawing a circle upward.
When *Qian* has intercourse with *Kun*,
Immediately the whole world appears. The central moving line of *Qian*
Turns the figure into *Li*. The repeated fire of Li (30)
Shines on the green jade peak from all around.

Posture 65

SHAKE FOOT

Bai Jiao

The first half this performace of *Bai Jiao* consists of turning the torso and slapping on the foot, and is similar in all but two respects to its previous performance. The two small differences include the way it transitions from the preceding form, and the execution of its final movement.

1. Diagram of the posture

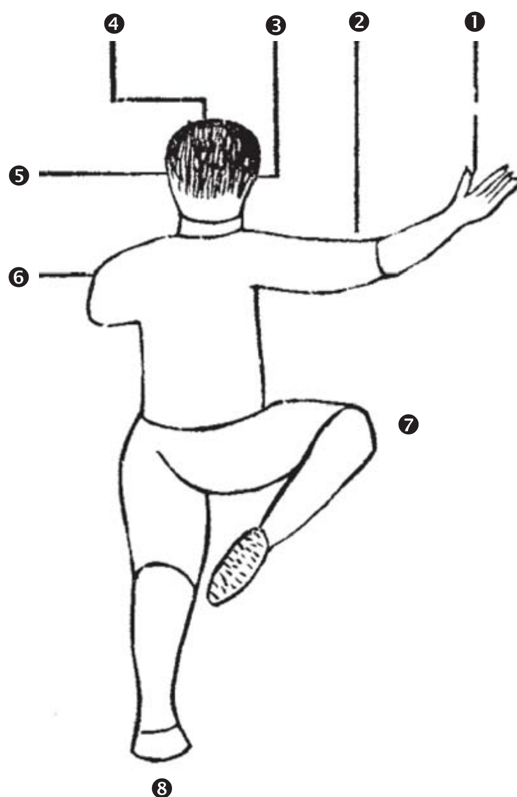


Fig. 3.65.1 Shake Foot (Bai Jiao)

Inscriptions:

❶ the right palm faces backward; the right elbow bends slowly;
❷ the right elbow tip points outward and assumes the role of a supporting pole;
❸ listen to the situation behind you;
❹ focus the energy at the top of the head;
❺ look straight ahead at level of the chest;
❻ the left hand is placed in front of the right nipple;
❼ lift up the right leg until the right foot reaches crotch level;
❽ bend the left knee and flatten the sole onto the ground.

2. *General description*

The preceding *Xia-bu Kua Hu* posture requires the right hand to assume a blocking position above the head against an attack from above, while ensuring that the right arm remains strong and immovable. Then, the right arm follows the body as it turns around to face the back. At the same time, the left hand moves gradually upward from its position behind the torso.

Meanwhile, following the torso's turn, first take a left step northwest, then a right step northwest. Spread both arms out also to the northwest, holding the fingers of both hands' together and placing them at nipple level. Raise the right leg northeast and hold the foot up at crotch level. Then move the right foot in a lotus-leg cross-cut gesture going from south to north toward the left, while the right palms move in the opposite direction from north to south. As they meet, slap the fingers of both hands on the right in-step, first the left fingers then the right.

After the slap, return the right foot to its initial position. Drop both hands downward toward the northwest from their position at the south, then without a break, draw a large circle backward-up-forward until they stop in front of the chest, place the left fist in front and the right fist behind. Connect the energy between both fists with the chest and the crotch. The right knee is bent and the right foot immobile.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

While the left hand moves from behind to draw a circle, the energy flows up from acupoint Ri-yue to the front part of the shoulder in direct rotation, then continues along the arm toward the left hand. The right hand applies the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration in reverse rotation, causing the energy to flow from the back part of the shoulder inward toward the fist. The left leg coils energy directly, starting from the toes up the thigh, through the crotch then to the Dan-tian. The right leg reels energy in the reverse direction, starting from the right toes up the thigh, eventually reaching the crotch.

4. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

The right hand pushes up to draw a bow in reverse rotation of the hand;
First of all remove the right arm to make way for the true hero[54].
Again, use both hands to punch obliquely left;
Move the right foot diagonally across the body[55]
and slap both hands on it
To proceed to the highest levels of skills perfectly executed.

[54] the left fist.
[55] In the style of the full lotus gesture.

Posture 66

HEAD-ON BLOW

Dang Tou Pao

This posture derives its name from its final move which comprises of a preventive strike to the opponent's head and other vulnerable areas. It is important to perform this posture as a smooth continuation of its predecessor, *Bai Jiao*.

1. *Diagram of the posture*

All the body parts and structures work as one to join the energy of the upper and lower body. Sink the waist energy down, otherwise, the soles of the feet will be disconnected from the crotch energy, and become weak and unstable.

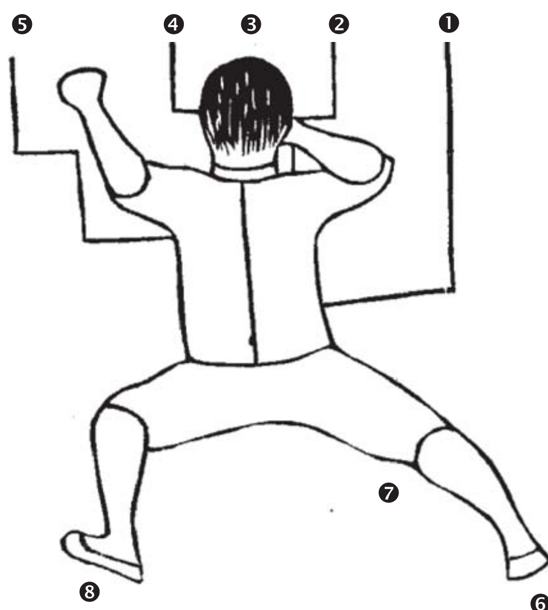


Fig. 3.66.1 Head-on Blow (Dang Tou Pao)

Inscriptions:

❶ point both elbow tips outward; both fists face each other: the left one placed in front, the right one resting behind to create an energy connection between them;

❷ relaxed and drop the shoulders down; do not raise them;

❸ focus the energy at the top of the head and send it down to acupoint Zhang-qiang at the tailbone which functions as a hinge in the body's movement;

❹ look at the left fist and concentrate you attention on the left elbow tip;

❺ close the chest and empty it completely;

❻ form a right hook foot with toes pointing inward and re-adjust the heel position by moving it outward; establish a close energy connection between the toes and heel;

❼ bend the right knee and open the crotch; the crotch must be rounded-in and the area around it empty so that energy can pass through;

❽ the big toe of the left foot turns inward to dig into the ground with the other toes and heel; the left leg takes a bow step; the knee should bend forward beyond the toes.

2. *General description*

Both hands move backward and down, cutting to the right in a large circle, then returning in a forward punch at head level using both fists. While drawing the circle, the left hand and left leg apply energy regeneration in direct rotation, while the right hand and leg apply it in reverse. After slapping on the right foot, point both elbows outward and face the knuckles of both fists upward. Withdraw both hands downward from their position at the upper left corner, then circle them upward to form a dual-fisted punch to the opponent's head. All four limbs use energy from the chest area.

Close the chest to connect its energy with the opened and rounded-in crotch. Turn the toes of both feet inward to connect their energy together

in closing. The energy at the top of the head coils the energy from the shoulders, knees and ankles outside in, releasing their total power into the double punch. Fix your gaze midway between the two fists.

Another name for the current posture is 'Center Guarding Punch,' and it is similar to the *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture. The crucial aim of *Dang Tou Pao* is to protect the heart or the central part of chest — as long as your heart is unshakable and still, all four limbs will be able to execute their principle function of protecting the body from attack.

3. *Internal power (nei jing)*

While turning backward to the right, draw a circle with both hands before punching both fists forward. The left fist leads, using energy focused in the left knuckles. If the fist does not hit the mark, strike forward with the outside of the elbow. The right fist's role is to support the left fist in its punch.

The left hand then draws back and down, after which the torso turns right then back and left. When this occurs, the left sole stamps on the ground to the left, in the direction of the body turn. At the same time, the right hand follows the leading left hand to take its position behind the latter in a double punch. The leading left fist punches with nine-tenths strength, that is, at almost full strength, while the rear right fist punches with at eight-tenths strength. Hence the punching strength ratio between fists is nine to eight. The left hand reels energy in direct rotation to punch at the left side of the opponent's torso. If it does not hit its mark properly or fully, the right fist completes the task.

As you close-in toward the opponent for attack, you need to apply the correct posture for optimum impact, so that the force and spirit of the whole body can be leveraged to help the left hand fully release power outward. Although both hands are energetically connected, they in fact punch diagonally from right to left in opening or releasing the energy, then con-

tinue in the opposite direction, from left to right, before closing or accumulating energy.

Opening and closing is the essential formula for the mastery of boxing. Since the human body is a microcosm of heaven and earth, your body's opening-and-closing can be compared to the opening-and-closing of heaven and earth and vice versa, where one becomes two and two is one, thus forming the oneness of the *Taiji* motif.

Taiji represents *yin* and *yang* in their formless manifestation everywhere, and so *yin* and *yang* may be considered as an alternative name for the *Taiji* motif, representing its two opposite meanings. Movement gives birth to *yang* substance, which correlates with the opening or release of energy releasing. Stillness gives birth to *yin* substance, which corresponds to the closing or accumulation of energy. Hence it is said that opening and closing is the key to mastering *Taiji* boxing.

For this particular posture, the left foot is placed in front and the right foot behind. The right foot then takes a step forward to stamp beside the left foot to bear an equal loading of body weight. From their previous position in front of the chest, both hands circle backward and upward before unleasing a forward punch, mirroring the final movement of the *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture. This, indeed, marks a return to the beginning.

Each beginning has its own end, while the end returns to the beginning in perpetual alternation. Hence to go into the realm of boxing is hard work, each round, each turn and each twist demanding a great amount of energy to gain skills, an investment of approximately ten to one, where ten is amount of energy expended and one, at best, refers to success.

When you have some strength, do not hesitate to practice; when your strength is completely exhausted, stop practicing — do not go into extremes and overstrain yourself as this will not lead to any benefits. If you follow the rules and principles, you will not have to wait too long for success as this will come naturally in full accordance with the level of your preparation.

4. *Diagram of the movement of both hands*

The two loops in the Fig. 3.66.2 and Fig. 3.66.3 depict the turning of both hands upward and forward from their position in the lower right corner. It is not possible to accumulate sufficient force and energy against the opponent without drawing a circular movement with both hands.

a) Movement of the right hand

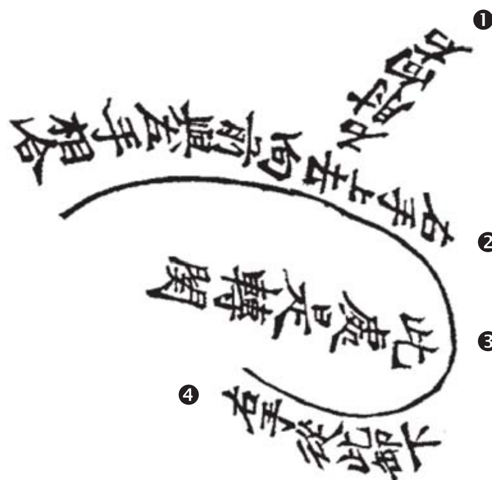


Fig. 3.66.2 Movement of the right hand

Inscriptions:

❶ point the right elbow outward;

❷ the right fist punches forward and works in concert with the left fist;

❸ this is the place the right arm turns;

❹ this is the place the right hand drops downward.

b) Movement of the left hand

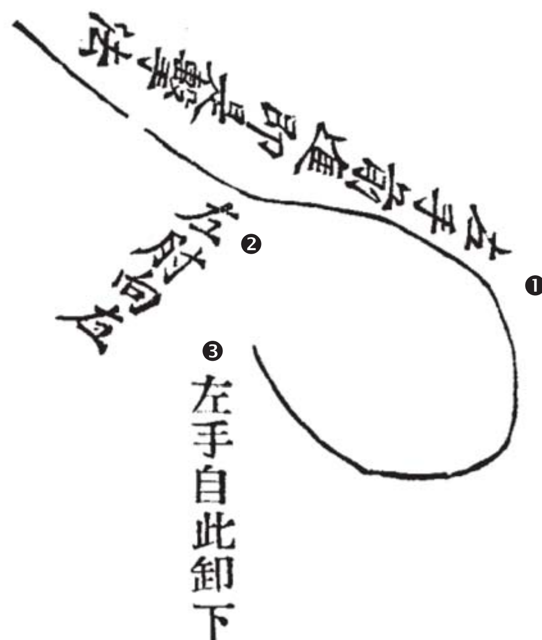


Fig. 3.66.3 Movement of the left hand

Inscriptions:

- ❶ this is the path of the left fist punching forward;
- ❷ point the left elbow left;
- ❸ from this place the left hand drops downward.

The path is executed according to the silk-reeling method of energy regeneration using both arms in circular movement.

陳氏太極拳圖說

5. *Symbolic meaning of the posture*

This posture is allocated to hexagram Kan (29), symbol of water, sinking and total peril. The separate paths of both hands resemble the upper divided line of Kan (29); the undivided line in the middle denotes the torso; while the bottom divided line refers to the widely spread feet. The strong line in the center implies that the figure is filled up with a solid substance. Weak outside but strong inside — this is what figure Kan (29) suggests.

The central line moves to change the Kan (29) into *Kun* (earth), which then has intercourse with *Qian*, turning the central *yin* line of *Kun* into the central *yang* line of *Qian*. This efficient transformation shows the efficacy of *Zhong-qi*, represented here as the 'second son'.

We we merge the symbols for the current *Dang Tou Pao* posture with the preceding *Bai Jiao*, we get hexagram Ji-ji (63), formed by the fire trigram below and water above, which symbolizes that which has been successfully completed. Ji-ji (63) is the inverse of Wei-ji (64), which signifies that the end will not arriave as long as the action is unceasing. In its initial form, hexagram Wei-ji (64) is formed by the water trigram below, denoting the tendency to flow down, and the fire trigram above, which signifies the tendency to move upward.

The *Jin-gang Dao Dui*[56] posture is allocated to the Two Forms (*Liang Yi*) born by *Taiji*. As Confucius states, "From the creation of heaven and Earth, all material things came into existence. And from all material things, the male and the female came into existence. From the male and the female, the husband and wife came into existence; and from husband and wife came father and son. From father and son, all matters which have no limits came into existence." Hence the final movement of the second half of the posture uses the images of 'second son' and 'second daughter' to denote *xue*

[56] The *Jin-gang Dao Dui* posture is explained here as it forms the basis for the *Bai Jiao* posture which follows. As in all postures, the final movements of a preceding form marks and informs the beginning of successive forms. Understanding how each posture links to the next is critical for the smooth performance and continual flow of energy.

(blood) and *qi* respectively. A combination of strong management and sufficient *qi* capacity can definitely create endless paths and prospects for the future. This explains why the *Li* (fire) and *Kan* (water) trigrams have been adopted here in the Ji-ji (63) hexagram arrangement, to emphasize that Ji-ji (63)[57] is followed by Wei-ji (64)[58], at which the routine is completed and ready to start from the beginning.

6. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

Opening and closing, the strong and weak,
They follow each other naturally.
Now rising and now descending, the circle rotates
According to the principle of alternation.
The *Dang Tou Bao* is a difficult form for the foe to resist;
Motion and stillness, the existent and non-existent:
This is truly what is called *Taijiquan*.

7. *Seven-character a line verse dedicated to the posture*

Taiji has always run on the principle of circularity;
Tradition has accepted this for countless years.
It consists of incisive content and principles,
Motion and stillness, they do each other no harm,
Hence the derivation of the name for the technique,
By which you can attract a foe into emptiness.
Its mechanism works like a trigger of a crossbow;
Tigers and panthers crouch in the deep mountains,
Water dragons soar up from fathomless pools.
In actual fact the opening and closing are not fixed,
Bending and stretching work in concert, following the forms.

[57] Ji-ji can be translated as 'just the end'.
[58] Wei-ji can be translated as 'still not the end'.

Taiji divides into *yin* and *yang*, but the spirit dragon
Transforms spontaneously, nobody knows how.
Heaven and earth are parents to all under the sky
Nourishing and refining the weak and the strong equally.
One generation after another, there is no end;
Odd and even — nothing lasts for long.
Qian and *Kun* resemble a quiver,
While *Taiji* is simply the great vessel.
Full and empty, growth and decline — this is the reason
Why everything is stored up in its stomach.
When you reach the end, it starts at the beginning;
It moves in one go, always relaxed and spread out.
Its shape leaves no traces behind it;
There is neither 'I' nor 'Others' on the Way you follow.
Taijiquan is the course of the Golden Mean,
In which *gong-fu* reigns above all.
Hold fast to the proper sequence
And never skip the normal steps;
He who tries his best, going to the great extent,
Cherishes his spirit gifted by the heavens.
Indulging in empty talk,
You thus increase the black substance,
But the real movements provide explanations straight-away.
A kite soars in the sky, a fish dives in a deep pool;
The upper and lower parts of the human body,
They are so interested in each other.
If you dedicate yourself to the study of human capability,
If you ask me of its essential meaning,
I'd tell you that its principle is wonderful and profound.
It always comes and always goes, like day and night,
Like the sun at the high point and the full moon in the dark.
If you actually want to get the truly valuable formula,
You will find it in *Taijiquan*.
Every single case seems to be like this,

It's not only about your ability to elbow your way;
If you turn your back on the Truth,
You'll simply find yourself left behind.
You can become a celestial being in the flesh
Just by following the practice of *Taijiquan*;
Like an uncarved piece of jade,
It is the true manifestation of your spirit.

End of Volume Three

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OLEG TCHERNE:
Philosophy of Taiji



OLEG TCHERNE

Mythology of Taiji

Chen Changxing

Chen Village Restoration Project



Q. Who was Chen Changxing?

A. Chen Changxing was the fourteenth generation Master of Chen family Taijiquan who taught Yang Lu Chan, founder of the Yang style.

Q. What is the Chen Changxing - Chen Village Restoration Project?

A. An effort to preserve the heritage of Taijiquan by restoring Chen Changxing's home in Chen Village, Wenxian, Henan Province, China.

Q. How is the project being funded?

A. By proceeds from the purchase of Master Chen Xiaowang's calligraphy or through direct contributions.

Q. How do I purchase calligraphy or make a contribution

A. Through the website below and in person at Master Chen Xiaowang's seminars worldwide. All people who buy calligraphy or make a direct contribution will have their name and the amount carved into a stone tablet to be displayed in Chen village.





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